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AN

ARGUMENT

FOR THE TRUTH OF

CHRISTIANITY,

IN A

SERIES OF DISCOURSES.

BY A. G. WILLIAMSON,
ALBANY, N. Y.

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PREFACE.

The author of these discourses has long seen with regret, a spirit of scepticism at work in community, and strong exertions making to destroy faith in the gospel of Christ. Being "set for the defence of the gospel," he has deemed it a privilege and a duty, to labour both in public and in private, to deepen men's convictions of the inestimable value and substantial truth of Christianity. He has not been an inattentive observer of the efforts of infidels and their mode of warfare. In former times it was an object with them to array *science* against the gospel, and hence they assumed at least a show of learning. This attempt has been thwarted, and by many able works it has been made to appear that every discovery of genuine science is in harmony with Christianity. Within a few years past their mode of warfare has changed. The *schools* are not now the objects of their attacks. They have left the schools and gone to the "common people," and the leading object *now* appears to be, to array *reason* against religion. Under these circumstances the author has thought that it would be useful to make an effort to meet them here, and show

that sound *reason* approves and sanctions the
of our salvation. With these views, early in his l
in the ministry, he prepared and delivered the o
draft of these discourses, without however the
intention of giving them to the public through the
Since that time, he has been repeatedly urged by
in whose judgment he confides, to revise and p
them for the press. This work he has finally a
plished, and with their numerous imperfection
are now submitted to the public. The author is
that they may possess little interest for the le
student in theology. He claims not the ability
struct such. He has written for the unlearned
tian, and if his work shall in any good degree "str
en the weak," confirm the feeble, or reclaim the dou
he will be satisfied that he has not laboured in
Though his work in its execution may be more h
than others, he flatters himself that it will not
less useful on that account. His ardent prayer
by this effort he may do some good in the name of
Jesus our Lord.

DISCOURSE I.

INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE.

For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.

ROMANS i. 20.

I DESIGN this discourse as the first of a proposed series in defence of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion, as presented in the volume of divine revelation. At a period of excitement and dissension among the professed followers of the Lord Jesus Christ —when the angry spirit of sectarian warfare, and the ill-advised efforts of bigotry and fanaticism, are doing much to advance the cause of scepticism, and little to promote the gospel, I deem it not only a sacred duty but a desirable privilege, to call back the attention of the people to a consideration of the first principles of our most holy faith, and to an examination of the grounds on which that faith is founded. Sincerely believing as I do that Christianity has come down to us burdened and corrupted with the devices and inventions of men, a considerable share of my ordinary labours, in the pulpit, is designed to strip away the veil which has for ages obscured the face of the Lord's anointed, and to present the "glorious gospel of the blessed God" in its original simplicity and purity. In this laudable work, I am sensible there is danger to be avoided. In our zeal to purge out the dross we should be *careful that we do* not waste the metal itself, nor

lose sight of the inestimable value of the pure gold of the kingdom. The voice of prudence warns us to beware, lest in gathering up the tares we root up the wheat also. It is not only important that we distinguish between Christianity and its corruptions, but it is equally important that we prepare ourselves to "give a reason for the hope that is in us," and to defend the gospel itself against the assaults of its enemies.

I am fully aware that much, very much indeed, has been said and written in defence of Christianity.* The treasures of literature and science have been brought forth and made to bear on this momentous subject, and so triumphant has been the result, that to this day, the arguments of the advocates of the gospel remain unrefuted and in many cases even unattempted. A long line of defenders of the faith have risen up and put forth their powers in the cause of the Redeemer. Many of them have been men of giant minds, possessing powers and resources surpassed by none. While I admire their talents, I must be permitted to observe, that it may be doubted if the mass of their labours have not been too learned, and in a measure removed from the grasp of common minds. Their works, indeed, have not been designed for ordinary readers, but for men of education and leisure. To such they are invaluable, and through them, they have been eminently useful to the world. Some volumes there are, it is true, which are strictly popular, and which have exerted a wide and happy influence on the interests of Christianity. But as infidelity exerts its most powerful influence over the popular mind, and as these works are not generally known, I have thought that some good might be done by another effort to check the

* See note A.

influence of a withering scepticism, where it is most injuriously felt. At all events, I enter upon the work before me with the pleasing hope of guarding this "little flock" from deception, and of laying before you an easy and I trust a satisfactory method of meeting and solving the most popular objections against the gospel of Christ.

In prosecuting my design in these discourses, I shall take a somewhat different course from that generally pursued, and endeavour to simplify the subject, as much as possible, that I may bring it to the understandings and capacities of all. The ground I take, and which I shall attempt to defend, is simply this: *The important doctrines of Christianity are true;* not merely because they are found in a book claiming a divine origin, but because they correspond with and are sanctioned by the voice of reason, experience and "nature, speaking through all her works."

I have long been of the opinion, that if Christianity cannot be defended upon its own merits, with the weapons of reason and common sense, it is not worth preserving. If there is nothing in it that harmonizes with the voice of nature, reason, and experience—nothing that carries along with it, to the unprejudiced judgment of man, the resistless conviction of its truth and value, certainly it can be of little use to the world; and for ever vain will it be to contend that it originated in the counsels of infinite wisdom and unerring truth.

Nature and experience never lie. The truths written out upon the pages of the great volume of creation, were written there by the finger of its Divine Author and will stand for ever. The truths that may be gathered from experience are equally sure and certain. Hence it follows that all truth must harmonize with

these principles, and no system can be true which does not accord with them.

It should be observed here, that the lessons learned from experience and nature, are general. They are as it were the first principles, the fundamental rules of the great science of truth and religion. Christianity professes to present the detail, and the practical operations of the science. Hence again, we may see that all its parts must harmonize with these first principles. I will take, as an illustration of these remarks, the science of mathematics. When the tyro enters upon this study, his first business is to make himself familiar with its fundamental principles. He learns to add, subtract, multiply, and divide; and in his whole course however far pursued, he never finds a problem that may not be solved by the application of these principles, or a demonstration that does not depend upon them for its correctness and truth. Destroy these and you destroy the whole science, root and branch; establish them, and you establish every conclusion resulting from their legitimate application.

I look upon the subject before us in a similar light. From nature, reason, and experience, man learns the rudiments of religion. Its great principles are written upon the face of nature and providence, and reason may read them there; and in all the ramifications of this greatest of all sciences, there is no one *truth*, that does not recognise these first principles, and harmonize with them, yea, even result from their legitimate application.

Now Christianity is but a further discovery, a more full exposition, and a clearer illustration of those eternal truths, whose rudiments are faintly delineated in the book of nature and providence. Hence follows the *necessary* conclusion, that the same God who wrote

the first principles of religion upon the face of nature, and shadowed them forth in his government, never wrote another book to contradict them, and if Christianity *does* contradict them, we may be sure it did not come from the great Creator. On the other hand, if it shall be found that Christianity but repeats the voice of nature and providence, in clearer and more distinct tones, and makes further revelations of God's will and purposes, then will the presumption be fair, that it came from the same Divine Author.

We should be unwise to close a book professing to contain new and important discoveries, in the science of mathematics, and while we were ignorant of its contents, call for witnesses to prove that it *was* written by some eminent mathematician. So in this case. It appears to me an unwise course for us, with the Bible in our hands, to close it and wrangle about its genuineness. In my humble opinion, the intrinsic excellence of the book itself, and its harmony with what we *know* of nature and providence, is the best evidence of its truth and divine origin.

From these remarks, you will readily and correctly conclude, that I am not about to agitate the question whether the several books of Scripture were written by the persons whose names they bear, any further than a vindication of their *truth* may render their genuineness probable. You may have it, for the sake of the argument, if you will, that these books were all written by heathen philosophers or Jewish rabbins; but what I shall attempt to prove is, that the essential *doctrines* here taught, are *true*. I am far from conceding the point, however, that the books of Scripture are not genuine. I thank God that infidelity has been met here, and the genuineness of Christian revelation vindicated, in a

manner, that leaves not a reasonable doubt. But I acknowledge, this point with me is one of minor i portance. Truth is truth. And whether Paul or Pe James or John, or some other person tells it, is a mat of comparatively trifling consequence. A lie, if t by an angel, would be a lie still, and truth though t by Satan, would be truth still. I care little from wh these doctrines came. Are they true? Do they h monize with the great lessons of truth written by the f ger of God upon his works, and manifested in his pro dence? Are they based upon those great fundament of the science of religion, which God, that cannot has exhibited before the eyes of the world, upon visible works of his hand and the wonders of his pr idence? These are the questions to which the cont versy will be pushed at last, and upon which Chi tianity must ultimately stand or fall.

Suppose, for instance, you take up the argument a prove beyond a doubt, that Paul actually wrote epistles that bear his name. What have you do towards convincing the sceptic? Why, you have j proved to him, that Paul was the author of a numl of letters, containing, as he believes, a mass of child and absurd superstitions; but you have not gone c step towards convincing him that Paul told the tru In my judgment, the better way would be to take the doctrines taught in these epistles and show hi that they accord with all that we see and know; a that they bear an harmonious correspondence to th eternal principles of truth that speak out from nat and providence, and are the same yesterday and to and for ever. When you have done this your worl done, and Christianity is placed upon a rock that stand while the world standeth.

This course I intend to pursue in reference to the Scriptures generally. And in following out this plan, you will at once perceive that it will be necessary to take those doctrines which constitute the prominent features of the Christian religion, and show that they are cognizable by reason in the manner above noted. It would not be fair reasoning to take merely *one* doctrine, and contend, that the whole system is entitled to credit because *that* is true; for it would be strange indeed, if there was not some truth in a book as large as the Bible. Nor will it do to select even a number of doctrines, that may be incidentally introduced, but have no immediate bearing upon the vital interests of the system. Candour and honesty require us to exhibit those great and distinguishing doctrines, that lie at the foundation of the whole theory, that run through the whole range and leaven the whole lump of the teachings of the Bible. *These* should be put to the test, and if they can be proved true, then are we bound to receive the whole system, in all its doctrines, resulting from or harmonizing with these principles.

Let it not be imagined, that the importance I here attach to the teachings of nature, providence, and reason, is calculated to countenance the idea that a revelation is unnecessary. It does not follow from the fact, that reason exercised upon nature and providence is able to recognize *some* truths, that it is fully sufficient to discover *all*. There are some truths in natural philosophy which are learned by the simplest savage that lives, and yet no one would contend, that all works upon that science are useless. There are some things, yea many, that men can see with the natural eye, some of them clearly, and others indistinctly, and yet a telescope is a very *useful instrument* to assist the sight.

And no man would be so childish as to argue from fact, that he can see some things clearly with his aided eye, that therefore a telescope is useless.

Now reason is the eye of the mind. There are s things which it sees clearly, and others indistin and yet again there are others, that lie entirely bey the reach of its vision. What the telescope is to eye, revelation is to reason. Its design is, to aid, to contradict reason.

> "When feeble reason, tired and blind,
> Sinks helpless and afraid,
> This blest supporter of the mind
> Affords its powerful aid."

If this view of the nature and intent of revelatio correct, you will at once perceive, that we must, a all, depend upon reason for all our confidence in r lation, and it is utterly impossible that revelation sh contradict that very reason, for whose guidance direction it was given. As no man would have confidence in a telescope that contradicts what clearly sees with the naked eye, so, no reasonable n can confide in a revelation which contradicts the c teachings of reason. Or take, if you please, the o illustration. Every man knows the first principle natural philosophy. Whether he ever heard of ph ophy or not, he knows some of its principles, and cannot believe any system of philosophy to be cor which does not recognise these first principles. instance; I am acquainted with the fact, that a s thrown into the air will descend to the earth. Th know as well without philosophy as with it. I suppose a book were put into my hands, claiming t a treatise on philosophy, in which the principle is

long adopted, that bodies do not gravitate toward the earth, but from it, and that a stone thrown into the air, instead of descending, will continue to ascend *ad infinitum*. You see at once, that I should pronounce it an imposition. You might labour to convince me, that the great Newton wrote the book, and it would make no difference. I could not believe, for I know, that nothing can be true which contradicts this established law of nature, which I see manifested around me every day. On the other hand, I am presented with a work upon philosophy. The author takes up the principle of gravitation precisely as I see it exhibited in the falling stone. He traces it out and explains its operation in things where I had not before observed it. He points me to the rising vapour and the falling shower, the murmuring rill and the roaring cataract, the ponderous globe in its movements, and the distant stars in their courses; he explains the operations of the principle in all these, and he informs me how it may be applied to the arts of civilized life. He shows me how it enters into the construction of the busy mill, and the gallant ship, and how it may be successfully applied to the accomplishment of purposes which the unaided arm of man could not accomplish. I am delighted. I perceive that it all accords with what I have seen, and what I know, and I pronounce it true. And yet no man would attempt to convince me that this work was useless, because I knew before, that a stone would fall to the earth.

So it is in the subject before us. There are lessons of truth and religion, which are clearly exhibited to the eye of reason, in the book of nature and providence. These lessons the "way-faring man" may read. Suppose, then, a book is put into our hands claiming to con-

tain a correct and true system of religion, and we upon examination, that it contradicts all the lesso reason and experience. We cannot receive it as but should be fully justified in rejecting it as an i sition. On the other hand, suppose the book r nises these principles, traces them out in result operations with which we were before unacquai and explains their application to our conduct in and our hopes of futurity. In this case we should it to our bosoms as an inestimable treasure. Nor any man to contend that it is useless or unnece because its rudiments were previously known.

I know there are those who contend that reason unaided by revelation, is able to teach us all that necessary to know; and they would affect to con it an impeachment of the infinite wisdom of G say, that the reason he had bestowed upon man not fully adequate to open to him all those treasu knowledge necessary to elevate him to the highes fection of his nature. Hence they profess to reje that is not within the purview of simple unaided son. I have a mind to query with these wise me a few moments, and see if they will reduce the prin here set forth to practice.

Why will they not contend that a man's eyes are fully sufficient to see all that is necessary seen? Why not say that it is an impeachment infinite wisdom of God, to contend that the eyes v He has bestowed upon man, are not fully sufficie present him with all that need be seen or known? not abide by the principle in practice, and reject at all that knowledge, as fabulous and deceptive, v comes to us from the aid of the telescope, and glasses? The astounding discoveries of Newton

all that world of wonders opened before us by the microscope, must be cast aside, for the unaided vision of man cannot reach them. And not only these, but there are many of the arts which require finer optics than God has given us to carry them on to perfection. These all must be stricken out, and with them spectacles must be taken from the eyes of the aged; for it would imply a censure upon the infinite wisdom of God, to suppose for a moment, that the eyes which he has given to man are not fully adequate for every purpose for which they are required, without any of these artificial helps! When men begin to reason in this way, we shall think there is some consistency in their rejecting revelation, through fear that they shall censure infinite wisdom for having made reason so feeble.

The truth is, that God has given man eyes, but there are many things that lie beyond the reach of his vision. To remedy this defect, he has given him ingenuity to construct instruments by which he can enlarge the sphere of his vision, and explore those fields of nature that must otherwise be for ever shrouded in impenetrable darkness. But observe, it is the eye that sees after all. In like manner, God has given man reason, the eye of the soul, but the sphere of its operation is limited. To supply this deficiency, he has given him a revelation, by which the field of his observation is enlarged, and new discoveries and new truths are laid open, which without it would for ever have remained among the secret things which man cannot penetrate. But mark, it is *reason* that sees them at last, and revelation is but the instrument that brings them to light. It was this view of the matter, that drew from the celebrated Locke the following sentiment: "The man who would persuade me to reject reason because it

have a revelation, does much the same as if he would persuade me to put out my eyes, that I may receive the light of an invisible star by the aid of a telescope." This would indeed be a pernicious mistake, but no more so than that which supposes that revelation is designed to supersede the necessity of reason.

Closely connected with this, is a propensity to expect too much of revelation, and to cast it aside because it does not reveal all that our curiosity desires to know. Some appear to think that revelation ought to teach them every thing, and because it leaves many things unexplained, they throw it aside as a cheat or imposture. Such would do well to remember, that some things are too high for man. To recur once more to our illustration. The eye of man is not only limited in its sphere of vision, in itself considered, but it is so, after all the aids that modern improvements can afford. Notwithstanding it has been most astonishingly enlarged by the powers of the telescope, yet there are many things that the best glasses cannot reach. But who ever heard a man offer this as a reason why that noble instrument should be discarded as useless? You may search for the most perfect instrument on earth, one that will lay the heavens as a map before you, but you cannot decide by actual vision, whether the planets are inhabited or not. You cannot number the stars, or determine the chymical properties of the materials that compose them. Of these things we *must* be ignorant. But this is no good reason for rejecting the means by which many of the most wonderful discoveries in modern science have been made.

Thus reason is not only limited in its field of successful operation when viewed in its own strength *alone*, but it is also limited with all the aid that revela-

tion can give. After all is known, that revelation can teach, there are many things that must remain unexplored. And this arises from the simple fact, that reason is like its possessor, extremely limited, and it ought not to be expected, that revelation, or any thing else, can make that infinite which God has made finite. I am not certain that I have not wandered from the legitimate subject of these lectures; but this being designed merely as an introduction, I was anxious to place clearly and fully before you, the ground upon which I propose to rest the defence of the gospel.

The sum of the matter is this. There are lessons written upon the face of nature and providence, which reason can read with certainty. These are true. There are others faintly indicated in nature, and fully developed in revelation. These also are true. And it is the object of these lectures to show that there is an unbroken harmony between the great fundamentals of religion, as presented to the naked eye of reason in nature and providence; and the further exhibitions of the same religion as presented and illustrated in the book of revelation. I shall attempt to prove, that Christianity, as it came from its Divine Author, is not the religion of the Bible only; but also the religion of reason, the religion of nature, and the religion of providence; and hence the strong presumption that it came from the God of nature; the fountain of reason, and the ruler of all events. I do not indeed expect to show that *every item* in the Christian system is clearly exhibited in nature or providence; but what I contend is, that its great fundamental principles are plainly written upon these works and ways of God; that they can be read by the eye of enlightened reason; and when revelation has laid *open the* further developments of the

system, nature and providence unite with the principles already learned, in bearing witness to their truth. If I shall be able, with any degree of clearness to prove that the great and leading principles of Christianity are true, I will not contend with any man about their origin. If he will not believe that the waters partake of the nature of the fountain; or if he feels disposed to contend, that *sweet* waters have flowed from a *bitter* fountain, he may have the argument to himself. Give me the incontrovertible fact that the waters *are sweet*, and I ask no more. My work is now fairly before me, and the method of treating the subject is fully before *you*. In my next discourse I shall commence an examination of the great principles of revealed religion, for the purpose of showing that they may be "understood by the things that are made."

Permit me to add, that the subject to which our attention will be directed is one of vast and incalculable moment. It is not a mere matter of idle speculation which may be true or false without seriously affecting the interests or the happiness of individuals and the world at large. But it is one that comes home to men's "business and bosoms," with a power that cannot be resisted. There are fountains of hope and rivers of bliss opened in the gospel of our Lord and master, which if dried up will leave the world a thirsty land. It is of some consequence for me to know whether my life is bounded by "earth's contracted span," or whether I may hope to live in immortal bliss beyond the grave. I cannot feel indifferent to this question, inasmuch as upon its answer depends my joy in life, and my hope in the last solemn hour which shall call me hence to be here no more. If I may anticipate with *unwavering* confidence, "a house not made with

hands, eternal in the heavens," and an immortal dwelling there, and if I may believe in a God whose tender care is always over me to protect and bless, then can I bear the ills of life with patient resignation, and in the last struggle with the pale terrific king, I can shout the song of victory over death and the grave. These hopes and joys are involved in the subject before us, and let our prayer be, that wisdom from above may guide us into all truth.

DISCOURSE II.

EXISTENCE OF GOD.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
GENESIS i. 1.

IN the preceding discourse I signified my intentio of delivering a series of lectures in defence of the Chri tian religion, as a system of divine truth. The mod of argument suggested was, to prove by the aid of rea son and natural religion, that the *doctrines* of Chri tianity are true. I proposed to take up and examin the fundamental principles of the gospel, for the pu pose of showing that they are sanctioned by the test mony of reason, nature and experience. To th examination and discussion I now invite your mo serious attention. I remark

I. *That the Bible teaches that there is a God.*

This doctrine is not set forth in the Scriptures a merely an incidental truth, or an unimportant item i the great system of revelation. On the contrary, it is pre sented as the great foundation on which the whol superstructure is reared, and in the fabric above the is not a stone that does not rest upon this. There i not a doctrine taught nor a moral precept urged, whic does not recognise the existence of God. To him th Christian religion ascribes the origin of all things a their Creator.

Man is naturally inquisitive, and when he looks upo the wonders of nature around him—the shining hea ens and the beautiful earth—he is irresistibly led t

whence they came, and how and where they
ed? You are doubtless aware, that the wisdom
world has been put to its severest task to find
ı to these questions. Various theories have
rented and propagated. They have been cher-
nd admired for a little season, and have been
ay with the lumber of human intellect, to be
ed by others, which in their turn have been
l, admired and forgotten. It is the business of
course to show, that *one* system, and *one* only
and that one is the system of the Bible. When
ıscribed the origin of heaven and earth to a wise
rerful Creator, he gave the only reasonable and
ohical answer, that ever was given to the ques-
ence they came. All other answers fail of sat-
the rational mind. There are amongst us,
ho claim to be wise, who have endeavoured to
the wonders of nature without the necessity of
ıg the existence of a God. Upon their theories
med necessary to bestow a passing notice.
ıe first to be noticed is that of the materialist.
ıtends that matter is eternal, having existed
past eternity, and being destined to exist du-
vithout end. It moreover asserts, that matter
tself, certain inherent and immutable laws, by
t is ever governed, and to which the universe
ted for all of form, motion, order and harmony
iscovers to the eye of the beholder. It is not
ry for me to enter here into the mysteries of
ory, or explain the mode of operation by which
ws proceed in the works of nature, and I will
e content myself with the above *outline** of the
and proceed to its examination.

* See note B.

Ordinarily speaking, we should consider it rat contradiction in terms, to talk of *laws* at the sam we denied the existence of a *lawgiver*. Gene where we find laws, we are able to trace them ba some intelligent source. I am therefore unable t ceive the propriety of contending for laws with lawgiver. But let this pass. Perhaps the pover language may be an apology for the use of the "laws" in this case. But the theory itself is lia many and strong objections.

1. Its first principles are assumed.

It has not yet been proved that matter is eterna it ought not to be expected that a simple assert hypothesis will be received as a stable foundati which to build a system of philosophy or religio will be perceived that the eternity of matter a laws, is the main pillar of this system, and it c exist for a moment without this foundation. How we ask, do men know that matter has existed fro past eternity? We have a history of the world extends back about six thousand years, and I a acquainted with any authentic record which ex further; nor do I know how I could prove eve existence of matter anterior to that period. I a that some geologists of note have contended, that are *appearances* in the geological structure of the which strongly indicate that it has existed much than six thousand years. It certainly, however, admit of a question, whether the lapse of six tho years is not a period sufficiently long to work all changes which *appear* to have taken place on, o the surface of the earth. But suppose we allow I believe is conceded, that the term "day" as us the first chapter of Genesis, is not limited to tw

four hours, but denotes simply an indefinite period of time; and of course, that the earth in some form may have existed for an unknown duration; yet this would not prove the eternity of matter. I hope it will be borne in mind, that the question between the materialist and the Christian, is not whether God created the earth six or ten thousand years ago, but whether there is a God who created it at all? It is not merely whether matter has existed for any given period of *time*, but whether it has existed from eternity? I wish to be as accommodating as possible, and will therefore give any reasonable length of time. You say there are geological appearances which indicate that the earth has existed more than six thousand years. Grant it. How *much* more? Will ten million years answer you? I doubt if you can discover evidences of change in the structure of the earth, which might not have been wrought in that time. Grant then for the sake of the argument, that the earth has existed ten million years, and yet its eternity is far from being proved, for even *that* long period is but a moment compared with eternity. It is not enough for the materialist to prove, that matter has existed five, ten, or a hundred millions of years, for its existence for that period, is no more proof of its eternity, than its existence for a thousand years or even an hour. I repeat; the *eternity* of matter is the very life and soul of the theory now under consideration, and we have a right to demand proof full to the point. There is so much difference between time and eternity, that we cannot regard the existence of matter, even for a long period of time, as conclusive proof of its eternity.

I recollect that I am dealing with a class of men who pride themselves upon their strict adherence to

reason and philosophy, and who profess that they will not believe without evidence. They must not therefore blame me if I scrutinize somewhat closely.

In proof of the eternity of matter, it is alleged to be *indestructible.* But how do we know that matter is indestructible? If there is so much true and genuine philosophy in the system of the materialist, certainly its *first* principles ought to be indubitable. But I must be allowed to thrust in a doubt between the assertion that matter is indestructible, and the conclusion, that it is eternal. It may be said with at least a show of propriety, that matter has existed for a long time, and though it is constantly undergoing changes, yet no part of it has been annihilated. This has been said. But allow me to ask, how do you know this? Have you measured the whole mass of matter with such accuracy as to be quite certain that there is not a particle more or less in the universe than there was ten thousand years ago? It has been said further, that all the researches of science have never been able to discover a method by which a particle of matter could be destroyed. Man can resolve almost every thing back to its original elements. He can dissolve and arrange and combine the particles of matter almost at his pleasure, but he cannot destroy it. All this is true; but what then? Are we to conclude that nothing can be done but what man can do? Man cannot make a spire of grass, and yet there is grass on earth. Man cannot make a tree, but yet there are trees in the forest. I readily and cheerfully grant, that to man, so far as we know, matter is indestructible. He cannot annihilate one particle, but this does not prove that it is absolutely so. It should be recollected that all man can do, is to bring different portions of matter together, and let the

elements and chymical properties of these different portions operate one upon the other; which is after all, no more than setting one portion of matter to the work of destroying another. So then, the sum of the argument is this. Because matter by the operation of its own laws will not to our knowledge destroy itself; therefore matter is indestructible and eternal, and there is no God who created it. I beg leave to be excused from following such conclusions as these. I insist upon it, the fact that man in his weakness and ignorance cannot destroy matter; and the other fact which I am ready to concede, that matter will not destroy itself by any combination of its laws or operation of its elements, afford no just ground for the conclusion that it is absolutely indestructible. If I were to build a house and lay its foundation so deep and rear its walls so high and firm, that my little child could not pull it down, I should deem him a child indeed, who would conclude that the house had no builder, but had stood from eternity, because its puny arm could not remove its corner stone. Man is a child; and most childish of children is that man who looks at the stupendous works of nature and concludes that the temple of the universe must have stood from eternity without a builder, simply because its pillars have not yet crumbled with age, and he cannot put forth his hand and crush the mighty fabric to oblivion. There is no difficulty in conceiving how God could make matter so that it could not be destroyed by man, or its own laws, and yet matter not be either indestructible or eternal.

2. Another objection to the system under consideration is, that it fails of its proposed object, even allowing its premises to be true.

The object is to account for the existence of the

heavens and the earth, without the necessity of an intelligent Creator. Suppose now it were admitted that matter with all its laws has existed from all past eternity, still the work of accounting for the *present form* and order and motion of the earth, and the heavenly bodies, is not half begun. There are some wonders in the form, and arrangement, and motion of the earth and the planets, which I do not hesitate to say, it is impossible to explain by any known laws of matter however long these laws may have been in existence I will take the earth for example. It moves in its orbit around the sun, travelling, say in round numbers, six hundred million miles in a year. Now I will grant if you please, that matter floating at random or slumbering in chaos, has a law by virtue of which it will form itself into globes or balls, of the same shape as the earth. I will admit further, that this law operated in such a manner as to form the earth a globe or ball. The earth is now formed, and if there is any truth in the theory of gravitation, the first movement it would make would be directly towards the sun. But where is the law of matter, which would give it its present movement round the sun? Where is that law of matter which could so nicely adapt this momentum to the power of gravitation, that it should pursue the even tenor of its way for ages without deviation? I know there is a property of matter called inertness, by virtue of which it remains in the same state of motion or rest in which it is placed, until it is overcome by some opposing power. When the earth was once put in motion, this law would keep it so, until stopped by some resistance. But where is the law which would put it in motion at first? The law of gravitation would give it *motion*, I confess, but it would be in a direct line to-

ward the sun; but you will bear in mind, that its present motion is not in the line of gravitation, the only known law by which it could be moved. Where then I ask again, is the law of matter which could move the earth with inconceivable velocity in a direction widely departing from the line in which the ever-active law of gravitation would move it? I have no hesitation in saying, that there is no such law of matter, and the man who attempts thus to account for the motion of the earth and the heavenly bodies, gives us a bare hypothesis without a solitary fact for its support.

Again, the earth turns upon its axis once in twenty-four hours, and we have a right to inquire for the law of matter which gives it this motion. We have a right to ask, not only for an assertion, but for something resembling proof, that such a law has an existence in pure matter, considered simply as such! As I said in the other case, if there was some power to give the earth its rotary motion at first, the law of inertness would continue that motion, until stopped by some resisting power. But we are not searching for a law that is able to keep matter in motion, when once it is moved. We want the law that gives the motion in the first instance, and this law must be found and proved to exist in pure matter, independent of any foreign power. Until this work is performed, I shall hold it as a valid objection, against the system of the materialist, that it fails of accounting for the origin of the heavenly bodies and the earth, with their motions, and order, and harmony. I include the heavenly bodies, in this last remark, because what I have said in relation to the earth, is equally true when applied to any other body in the solar system.

II. The second theory, which I propose to examine,

is a modification, or rather, perhaps, an improvement of the system of materialism.

I know not that it has received a distinctive name, or a "local habitation," but its novelty, if nothing else, entitles it to a small share of our attention. Like the system of the materialist, it contends that matter is indestructible and eternal; and, what is most singular, that every *body* in the universe is produced from light. Taking the solar system as an example, the following is the theory: Light is matter. The sun is the fountain of light. It is constantly sending off floods of light, and consequently of matter. These particles of light, after traversing regions of space, assume to themselves the power of attraction; a nucleus is formed, around which other particles gather. The body, thus formed, soon acquires sufficient density to be affected by the power of gravitation towards the sun. As a matter of course, it moves with accelerated velocity towards the sun; but, being attracted in its way by other bodies, it is turned from a direct line, and passes by, but near that luminary. So great, however, is its momentum, that it continues to move, until the power of the sun's attraction has brought it into an elliptical orbit. These are comets, which, I believe, are allowed to be less dense than the planets. In this manner they continue to move around the sun, acquiring greater density to themselves, and their orbits becoming less and less elliptical at every revolution. In this manner they *will* revolve, until they become as dense as the earth, and their orbits as nearly circular. Moreover, it is alleged, that they continue to approximate the sun, and will do so, till they, and all that are *now* planets, return to be burned in the great fountain from whence they sprang at first. In this way, the body of

the sun is replenished, so that it does not diminish; and after this manner, "old worlds are burned and new ones made." I have introduced this new theory, more than any thing else, for the purpose of showing how liberally men are obliged to draw upon the resources of imagination, in order to account for the existence of the heavens and the earth, when they reject the simple fact, that "God made them." The most I can say of it is, that it is an ingenious hypothesis, without a single fact for its support.

In the first place, it has not been proved that light is matter, the different particles of which are, under any circumstances, capable of attracting each other, and assuming a solid and opaque form. This is a matter of vital interest to the system, and it should be proved by something more than a supposition, before we are required to give assent to any conclusions resulting from these premises. Let us have some fact, which will go to prove that particles of light, sent off from a luminous body, have the power of gathering themselves into solid bodies, of greater or less density; then, and not till then, will there be some shadow of foundation for the subsequent part of the theory.

But there is another objection to this theory. I suppose it will be admitted, that there was a time when the first body was formed from these rays of light. It begun to gravitate and move towards the sun. Why did it not go in a straight line thither, and thus, in its youth, return to the fountain whence it came? This it would most certainly do, unless drawn from its course by some other body. But at this time, the fact is, there was no other body that could attract it. It must, therefore, remain among the mysteries of this theory, how this first comet, if you please to call it so,

happened to turn aside from its natural course and make a circuit round the sun, instead of falling directly into it, as it would inevitably have done, had it obeyed the law of gravitation.

Still another objection remains. It is an important item in this theory, that the orbits, both of the comets and planets, are gradually assuming a less elliptical form. Unless this is admitted, there is no conceivable way in which a comet can be transformed into a planet. But where is the evidence of this position. It ought to be proved, that the earth and *all* the planets are approaching the sun, if they are to fall into it at last. But where again, I ask, is the evidence upon which this position is founded? I frankly confess, that I have not been favoured with a view of the proof.

But, after all, this theory of *light*, leaves us as much in the *dark* as we were before. It tells us, that the earth and all the solar system, originated in the sun and were formed by the operation of the laws of matter, which existed in the particles of light emitted from the king of day. But where the sun himself came from, and how he was formed, with the wonderful power of giving birth to worlds, it does not tell. Like all other systems, it has its mysteries, and the worst of it all is, that it leaves involved in mystery, the very point it was framed to explain.

I will not pursue the investigation of these systems of worldly wisdom further. Man has, indeed, sought out many inventions, and we may safely say of this kind of speculations, as Solomon said of making books, "there is no end." I have purposely omitted any notice of the systems of ancient philosophers, because *they are* out of date, in this day; and I have only

noted, among modern inventions, those which set up the highest claim to our veneration, as systems of true philosophy. More than this would have been unnecessary, and less I could not do. Hear, then, the conclusion of the whole matter:—

The systems which I have had under consideration, entirely fail of accounting for the existence of the heavens and the earth. They by no means assign causes which are adequate to the production of the effects; and, without exception, they end in nothing better than vanity and vexation of spirit.

Turn, now, your attention to the Bible, and the mystery is explained—the enigma is solved, and an adequate cause is assigned for all the wonders of the universe. It ascribes the origin of the heavens and the earth, to a being whose wisdom never errs, and whose power knows no control. When we gaze upon the firmament in its glory, and contemplate the earth in its beauty, and, lost in astonishment and wonder, ask whence they came? the answer comes to us from the pen of the sacred historian: "In the beginning, *God created* the heavens and the earth;" and before the light of this truth, the darkness, that brooded over the origin of all things, vanishes at once. This is the only rational and philosophical answer that was ever given to the question before us. It is reasonable and philosophical, because reason and sound philosophy both declare, that the works of the material universe could not have come into existence without some cause, much less could they assume their present form and motion without some power and intelligence, more than has ever yet been proved to exist in pure matter. I think I have shown, that there are no laws of matter which could frame the universe, and even that the earth,

by some means, has a motion opposed to the or
laws of its elements. It is, therefore, but mo
reason, and the elements of philosophy, which
that the universe owes its existence and motio
order and harmony, to some intelligent cause,
pendent of matter. That cause we call, and the
calls, GOD.

This subject will be continued in my next disc
and I, therefore, dismiss it, for the present, by a
plication to the object of these lectures. I said, i
commencement, that my object would be to prove
the fundamental doctrines of the Bible *are true*,
out agitating the question of their origin. The
ence of a God, is the first article in the faith o
Christian, and without it, the whole system mus
to the ground. Now, I contend, that when M
commenced, by ascribing the origin of heaven
earth to God, he began with as reasonable and p
sophical a truth, as mortal man ever uttered. I
not even contend with you, whether Moses or
other individual wrote the books that are us
accredited to him; but I do say that, whoever
them, commenced with a solemn truth, which no
can overthrow. If others can bring themselv
believe that knaves, conniving to write a book on
pose to deceive, would dig deep and lay the found
on the everlasting rocks of truth, I cannot pause t
pute with them; but I point you to this corner s
and I insist, that whoever may have laid it, it is t
and would be none the less true, if it were laid b
hands of Lucifer himself. I have, therefore, a rig
demand your assent to so much of the Bible as
and also to all the conclusions legitimately flowing
these premises. If this is the foundation, then I

your concession, that Christianity has its foundation in truth. Whether the superstructure is in harmony with the foundation, is reserved for further inquiry. All I now ask, is the position, that there is a God who created the heavens and the earth. I have begun at the corner stone, and I shall go upward with the building, using the best of my humble endeavours to show, that the topstone may, at last, be brought forth with joy and with shoutings of GRACE!

DISCOURSE III.

EXISTENCE OF GOD CONTINUED.

Know ye that the Lord is God; it is he that hath made us and not we ourselves. PSALMS c. 3.

IN my last discourse, I had under consideration the subject of the existence of God. I attempted to show, that the manner in which the Scriptures account for the origin of the heavens and the earth, affords the only reasonable and satisfactory solution of the question, that was ever offered. I examined some theories, that men have invented, and endeavoured to show, that they fail, utterly fail of accounting for the wonders of the universe as seen around us. In this discourse I propose to continue the same subject. We have looked at the heavens and the earth in their magnificence and glory, and have concluded, that they did not spring into existence by chance, and that the Laws of matter are incompetent to their production; and hence we have argued, that the Scripture is true which saith, *God created them*. We now turn our attention to *man*, and our object will be attained if we are able logically to arrive at the conclusion, that the text is true which saith, "It is he that hath made us and not we ourselves."

I pretend not to originality in the arguments which I am about to offer you. It is ground, that has been trod, and I claim no more to myself than the *manner* of *presenting* the subject.

That we exist is a fact beyond all controversy. This is no speculation, but a sober matter of fact, which every man knows with certainty. At all events, if a man says he does not know the fact of his own existence, he confesses himself a fool, and to reason with him were useless. I speak not to fools but to men of common sense. The position is, that we do actually exist, and the question is, how came we into existence? We did not make ourselves, and we surely cannot say, that we originated in absolute nothing. It follows then as an incontrovertible truth, that there must have been an adequate cause for our existence. In reference to this cause, whatever it may be, it may be observed, that it must be self-existent or created. It either existed from all past eternity, or it begun to exist at some period of time. If there was a time when it came into existence, then it must have originated in some cause, for the cause that produced us could no more create itself, than we could create ourselves. So, if we say the cause that produced us was the product of some antecedent cause, the same reasoning will hold good. That antecedent cause must have existed from all eternity, or it must have come into being at some period of time, and of course originate in some other cause. The same reasoning, that will apply to ourselves will apply to the cause of our existence, or the cause of *that* cause, or even to the ten-thousandth in a retrograde series, and the conclusion will be, that whatever *begins* to exist must have a cause, and hence there must have been something from eternity, necessarily self-existent. Any thing, that has a beginning must have a cause for that beginning, and cannot therefore be self-existent. These positions we think are self-evident. We therefore lay it down as a posi-

tion that cannot be successfully controverted, th something must have existed from all eternity, whic was not the production of any cause, but necessaril self-existent, and independent of all causes.

The question now arises; what is that, which i self-existent and the cause of all subsequent existence The materialist will contend, that it is *matter.* have before passed some strictures upon the doctrin of the eternity of matter showing that it is destitute o proof. But the doctrine now before us, is designed t account for *man's* existence without the necessity o admitting the existence of an intelligent Creator. teaches, that the efficient cause of man's existenc with all his powers of body and mind, may be foun in those ever-active laws, which exist and have exis ed in matter from all eternity. The point of the arg ment lies in the position, that these laws or principl which produced man, were not *given* to matter by an separate, or pre-existing intelligence, but that they e ist independently, originally and eternally in pure ma ter. And it is further alleged, that these laws are ev active; they are now, and ever have been, in operatio producing all sorts of life, and every degree of intell gence, man not excepted. I propose now to ent upon an examination of this theory, to determine, i possible, whether it can furnish a solution of the prol lem of man's existence. Here is man at the head c animated nature: he thinks, he perceives, he feels an reasons. He is not self-existent, and, of course, mu be the product of some adequate cause. The simp question is, whether matter, considered purely as suc is adequate to the production of such a being, by t operation of its own inherent laws? The advocate the affirmative of this question, must take one or t

other of these positions. He must either contend that laws, fully adequate to the production of a thinking, reasoning man, exist in all matter, even every particle, or in some portions and not in others; or, lastly, that they exist in the whole mass taken together.*

1. Let us suppose that all matter contains those laws which originate life, thought, and intelligence, it will follow, that every particle of matter in the universe is capable of producing an intelligent being. If, therefore, these laws are ever-active, we might have expected that they would, long ere this, have peopled the universe—rocks, hills, mountains, valleys, and waters—with thronging myriads of intelligent creatures. Why does matter, with laws fully adequate to produce a thinking man, lie, for ages on ages, in senseless marble, when these wonderful laws are all the while in full and vigorous operation? The truth is, there are no such laws there; and, until trees begin to talk, and rocks to sing, the idea under consideration, can be regarded, by the wise and prudent, in no other light, than one of the wildest and most extravagant vagaries of the human imagination. If *all* matter contains ever-active laws for the production of man, then, certainly, the greater part of it is very disobedient to those laws, and would be as well without them.

2. Suppose those laws, or principles, exist only in some parts or portions of matter. To such a supposition, it may very properly be objected, that it is entirely gratuitous. No discovery of science, nor any experiment in philosophy, has ever yet been able to detect any law or property belonging to one particle of matter, as such, which does not belong to the whole mass.

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* See note C.

Where, then, I ask, is the propriety or truth of position, that some portions of matter have lav can produce man, and that others have no suc But there is another objection. The suppositi if it were true, would fail of securing its ob would not account for man's existence w creator. It would surely require some knowle intelligence to separate those particles in whi mighty laws exist, from those in which they Where, then, without admitting the existence o will you find that mysterious agency, which s tinguish between the one and the other, and and arrange them in such a manner as to p thinking man?

3. Suppose that these laws exist not in every of matter by itself, nor yet in some portions se considered, but in the mass, taken as a whole

To this supposition I urge the objection, tl are no facts for its support. There are no reason or philosophy, upon which we can just the position, that the whole mass of matte together, is subject to any other laws than thos may be found in its several parts. Take the e instance, and there is not a shadow of evic show, that there are any laws in the universe ter, which do not exist in the earth. I believe a fixed principle in philosophy, that all matte ject to the same general laws; and, hence, l authorized to conclude, that the whole has a which do not exist in the several parts.

But, in order fairly to test the question, whe laws of matter are adequate to the production o being as man, I will suppose a case which easily conceive, and which will place the

fully before you. Suppose the hand of destruction should pass over the face of the earth and obliterate every vestige of the human family. There is not now a solitary man upon this globe of earth. The question is, where are the laws of matter that will people earth again, and cause it to swarm with intelligent beings? No law of matter would be affected by the destruction of every man that lives. The streams would flow, and vegetation flourish as it does at present. And yet, will any man contend, that there are laws of matter which would repeople the earth? I think not. But why? If it has been peopled once by the simple operation of its own laws, why might it not be again? But, I ask, where is the evidence, that such laws exist, save in the vain imaginations of men? If matter possesses those ever-active and enduring laws that are capable of giving birth to man, without the aid of any extraneous power or intelligence, then why is it, that men are not found rushing into life in those regions where human footsteps never trod? Why are not sages in wisdom struck from the flinty rock, or dug from the bowels of the earth? Yea, why are not these mighty laws at work in the desolate wilderness, where human wanderers never strayed, peopling her solitudes and caves with the human species? If there ever was a law of this kind, it either exists now, or it has been abolished. If there is now a law that can produce man by any other means than ordinary generation, where is it? And echo answers, where? If there is now no such law, then when, and by whom, was it repealed or abolished?

There is still another point of view in which this subject may be presented. A man in health is struck dead, with a fit, or by the electric fluid; and now, cold

in the embrace of death, lies the same mass of that composed the living man. Now if the pri of life, thought and knowledge, existed origina independently in matter, that corpse would ki much and think as intensely, and act as power the living man. Should it be said that these la ceased their operation in consequence of the de ment of the corporeal system, caused by the fit electric shock; I reply, that this is changing th tion. It is placing the origin of life and thou orgi n: structure and not in the inherent prope matt r. If this is the case, and the laws of from which life and thought proceed, are dev only when its particles are disposed in a partic der, then I ask, and press the question for an a where is that mighty power, and wonder-workin dom which can arrange the systematic organi necessary to produce life and thought? Do wisdom exist in matter antecedent to its organiz Surely not, for the position just taken was, that ledge and thought were dependant upon organic ture, and of course they cannot exist befo structure is formed, more than an effect can p its cause in any other instance. Where, then, a ask, is that searching wisdom which forms an o zation, in accordance with nature's laws, wit wonderful precision, that dead matter thinks and It is evident, that even this theory if it were true, fail of accounting for the existence of man, with mitting a pre-existing intelligence. I repeat, tha is not necessarily self-existent, and hence, that was a time when he began to exist. The beg and continuance of his existence depend upon *cause.* Grant, that the continuance of life and th

l upon organic structure, and, that life began
the system was framed and properly organized;
t, the difficulty is not removed.* There remains
me fatal and insuperable necessity for antece-
nowledge and power to arrange the structure of
achine. It is alike opposed to every principle
on and philosophy to suppose that blind, uncon-
matter operated upon by nothing but its own
ess, should move itself and arrange its several
n such order as to produce a living, reasoning
If one should tell me that this house was built
laws of matter, that the materials of which it is
icted moved and arranged themselves in the or-
which you now see them, I should consider him
of sound mind compared with that misguided
who, in his zeal to demolish the throne of God,
es not roundly to assert, that blind matter op-
upon by nothing under heaven but its own laws,
and arranged itself in such a manner as to pro-
nan, the masterpiece of the Creator's works.
I look at these walls and seats, even though I
t seen them in the process of erection, yet I
conclude that there was knowledge and design
ned in their construction. From the things them-
I learn that there was a builder. So also, when
nese seats filled with listening auditors, I cannot,
not say that they all originated in a game of
, and there was no thought or knowledge con-
in your creation. I dare not say, that "fear-
nd wonderfully" as we are made, all our aston-
powers of body and mind originated in a source
there was neither wisdom nor intelligence.
the things that are made, I learn the Maker's

* See note D.

power and Godhead, and upon every countenance before me I see the imprint of God's forming hand, giving me to understand that it was "He that made us, and not we ourselves."

There is a subterfuge to which men sometimes flee when hard pushed in the argument relative to the origin of man, which remains yet to be examined. I beg pardon, but I cannot regard it in any other light than the veriest subterfuge. But here it is. It is said, that there is a continued and uninterrupted succession of grades in the scale of being, from those that are but one remove from inanimate matter, up to those who are endued with the most enlarged and wonderful powers of mind. From the polypus up to man, there is an uninterrupted chain of progression in the scale of being, the different links of which are so nearly allied as to render it difficult to decide where the one begins and the other ends. The most perfect in one grade come very near or perhaps exceed the least perfect in the next succeeding grade, so that it is difficult, if not impossible to fix the line of distinction. Thus, for instance, the most knowing among the monkey-tribes, come very near or exceed in point of intellect, the least intelligent of the human race. It is further alleged, that there is a constant improvement going on in each of these grades of being. Hence the conclusion is drawn, that some hundreds of thousands of years ago, man might have been a very different being from what he is at present, and that he has progressed from an inferior order of beings.

I object to this theory upon the same ground that I have to several others. It is entirely hypothetical, being destitute alike of reason or facts for its support. I grant you that there are all the different grades of being

for which you contend, and that they are as nearly allied as you please. But there is not one solitary fact upon which you can found the opinion that there is any such system of progression or improvement in operation in the different grades, as the hypothesis assumes. If there is any thing in it that deserves even the name of plausibility, it all rests upon the position that there is an onward and upward progress in every grade of life. But there is no proof of this position. There are no facts that will go to prove that the dog, the ape, or the elephant, of the nineteenth century knows more, or is in any respect one step in advance of his progenitors beyond the flood. I should not dare affirm that there is a progressive improvement in the human species. It is true that individuals have in every age rose, by the cultivation of their powers to an eminence above their fellows. This was as true five thousand years ago as it is now, and I have no evidence that the great mass of mankind, have progressed one step, or that they differ materially from their forefathers. It has frequently happened, that one nation has improved for a season in the cultivation of their *mental* faculties, and rose to a high point of civilization; but it has often happened also, that this same nation has subsequently made a retrograde movement, and sunk as low as before. There is not therefore, the least evidence that man has progressed; and hence the foundation of the theory is laid in sheer assumption. But if there are no facts to sustain this theory, there are strong reasons to be put in the opposite scale. If this system of progression is constantly in operation, we might reasonably expect that the deserts and solitudes of the earth would be peopled by those who are constantly coming out from the haunts and dens of the beast, to take their sta-

tion, and henceforward to rank with man. If there is a law or principle in operation, by virtue of which, *some* were transformed six thousand years ago, one would naturally suppose, it was high time that some more were coming into the ranks of manhood through the same door. But these things we do not see, and hence we have a right to conclude that the theory is defective.

But I observe again, upon this subject, that even if we were to allow the truth of the system, it would fail of accounting for man's existence or removing the difficulty. I lay before you the fact, that there was a time when man began to exist, as such, and I ask for the cause of that existence. I care not if the time was when he was as ignorant and inactive as the snail that crawls in our evening path. I care not if he progressed from that to an ape, from an ape to a Hottentot, and from a Hottentot to a civilized man. There was still a time when he began to exist as man, and I ask for proof of the existence of a law of matter, that could produce him. It avails nothing to say, that he progressed from a lower order of beings. It merely removes the date of his existence a little further back without throwing a particle of light upon its cause. If it is insisted that man progressed from a lower grade of beings, I still have a right to demand proof, that there is some law of matter which will produce one of that lower grade, in some other way than by procreation; and when that is done, I inquire for another law that will transform him into a man! It would be a gratifying piece of intelligence to me, and I doubt not to the world, to be informed what law of matter there is, which will first create an ape or an orang outang, and then metamorphose him into a being endued with all the faculties

of body and mind that belong to the human species. But I will not dwell here. If any men feel disposed to search for their ancestors among the beasts and creeping things of the earth, I will not deprive them of any honour which they may claim on account of their parentage; neither will I contest the question of any real or supposed resemblance between the fathers and the children. But, "I pray thee, have me excused." Give me God for my father and you may have whom you will. I have now examined some of the inventions of men, which are designed to account for man's existence without the aid of an intelligent Creator, and I proceed with the more direct and positive proof, that there is truth in that Scripture which saith, "God created us, and not we ourselves."

We are in truth wonderfully made, and we need but examine our own frames to find abundant proof that we came from the hand of a wise master-builder. Our powers, both physical and intellectual, are precisely fitted to our circumstances, and nicely adapted to the world in which we live. Our bodily powers are just such as the circumstances of the case render necessary, and there is nothing superfluous or lacking. In order to see the force of this argument, let any man suppose for a moment that he is clothed with omnipotence, and is about to bring into existence a race of intelligent beings, on purpose to live in just such a world as this. Let him bring all his wisdom and knowledge to bear upon this one point, to fit them for the sphere in which he intends to place them. Do you think he could do better than to take an exact copy from man? Suppose you had power to alter the form, size, or mechanism of the human body, or to give it any new organ which you please; where would you alter it for the

better, or what new appendage would you add? my life I cannot tell where I should begin, or w better I could make it. These general remarks sp loudly in favour of intelligence and design on the of the Creator of man, and lead us to anticipate c proof on the detail of particulars.

It would be impossible for me in the space allo for these discourses, to enter largely into an exan ation of particular parts of the body. Besides, I such a work would possess little interest. I there select one point, and that a very simple one. It is useful organ the eye. It was necessary that man sho see, and without this power he would have been a n miserable, helpless being. We are furnished v eyes, with which we see. Whether they were m for that purpose, or whether they came by chance, will judge. It is certain, however, that we have e and that we use them for the purpose of seeing. sun shines to enlighten the earth, and it was not c necessary for us to have eyes, but it was also neces that they should be of a particular construction, s to correspond with the measure of light which w this distance receive from the sun. Any one who experienced the pain produced by an excessi light will perceive at once, that eyes w worse than useless had they not h ference to this circumstance. are at different times and pl light, and much inconven result, had there not Now the human eye cumstances, and it would have it on purpos

designed for a sphere where there is only one half or where there is twice as much light as we have on earth, for in such a case, this organ would be nearly useless. And then, the variations of light are provided for by the expedient of contracting and dilating the pupil in such a manner as to admit more rays when the light is faint, and less when it is strong. Should any one feel disposed to object, that man's eyes are not fitted for so great variations of light as occur between the day and the night, and ask why the eye was not so constructed as to admit of seeing in the night? I answer that even here the wisdom of the Creator is seen. Man needs repose, and he passes his nights in sleep. There are animals, however, whose mode of life requires that they should see in the night. It is this which furnishes a reason why man's eyes should differ from those of birds and beasts of prey. But to return to our argument. There is no necessary connexion between the shining of the sun and the construction of an eye, for the eye is formed in darkness. Nor is there any connexion between the measure of light which we enjoy in this world, and the formation of an eye of a certain and peculiar construction, for if there was, the owl's eye would be formed like a man's, or like those of the domestic fowl. The degree of light we have here depends upon our distance from the sun. But will any man contend that the earth's distance from the sun has any bearing in forming the eye in such a manner as to correspond with the degree of light into which it is to emerge? I trust not. Why then is the eye so constructed? I can give no answer without admitting intelligence and design, for blind chance or unconscious matter would as soon have made a man without eyes as with them, or have given him those of

one construction as readily as another.* An e
writer has truly observed, that "the human e
much an instrument, and is formed on as pu
chanical and philosophical principles as the te
Its use is to collect the rays of light and cast a
of surrounding objects upon a net of nerves
for that purpose, from which the sense of seein
veyed to the brain, by means of the optic nerv
this use the eye is formed, and to this end all
are wisely and nicely adapted. The telescope
upon precisely the same principles, and the
of that noble instrument took his hint from th
ture of the eye. Now we look at the telesc
examine its different parts, and we admire the
the maker; for we never doubt that it was
some intelligent being. And yet there are n
will look upon the human eye, and though
original of which the telescope is but an imperf
and though its construction is far more nice a
they will still contend that it is the work of
and there was no knowledge or design in its fo
Now I contend that every argument which w
that there was intelligence and design concern
construction of the one will bear with equal
favour of the other also. I know of no reas
lieve the telescope was designed to assist th
which will not also prove that the eye was ma
with. If there was design, then there must ha
a designer, and if so, there is a God.

It has been well said that a number of i
might accumulate proof, but that one sound a
is enough to establish a given point. Here th
my stand, and as it is my purpose to study b

* See note E.

much as is consistent, I present this one case alone. I know it is but *one* out of countless multitudes of arguments of the same nature which might be drawn from a consideration of the human frame, and yet I am willing to say, if there was nothing else, *this* would be sufficient to brand with falsehood any and every system which teaches that there was no design or intelligence concerned in the production of man. There is no chance for evasion here. It cannot be contended in this instance as in some others, that the construction of the organ, determined the use which should be made of it. It will not do to say that man found eyes very convenient to see with, and so he concluded to use them for that purpose. Such reasoning will not answer, because eyes are good for nothing but seeing, and there is no other imaginable use to which the creature could put them. And moreover, the power of seeing is one that could not be dispensed with, for man must see or he perishes.* I present the Atheist with this one case, and I ask for an explanation. How happens it that men have eyes at all? How happens it that they are precisely of that peculiar construction which the circumstances of the case rendered necessary? How comes it to pass, that an instrument formed in darkness is nicely adapted to the purpose of seeing in that measure of light which the sun affords at this precise distance? How is it, that the variations in the degree of light are provided for by means of the contraction and dilation of the pupil? Why, after all, were these eyes not placed upon the back side of the head, in preference to the side towards which the construction of his limbs rendered it necessary that he should walk? Why were man's eyes not constructed like the owl's, so that

* See note F.

he could see better in the night than the day? These are questions that the Atheist ought to be able to answer; and mysteries which he ought to explain. The man who will do this will do more towards shaking my faith in God than ever yet has been done. If any mortal man will undertake this work, I will listen with patience, and all possible candour to his arguments, and when he has done, if I cannot controvert his positions I will take the fearful leap into the marvellous darkness of Atheism. But until the wisdom of this world gives a more rational and satisfactory account of this matter, I shall be content with the scriptural solution which gives me to understand that the hand of a wise Creator was engaged in the work, and "it was He that made us, and not we ourselves."

The objection so often urged against these views of the origin of man, that we cannot form full conceptions of such a God, or comprehend his self-existent eternity of duration, has no weight with me. My faculties are and must be limited in their sphere of operation. With the utmost stretch of imagination itself I am able to grasp but a span, and hence if these faculties could comprehend a being, he would not be a God. I cannot form an adequate idea of infinite space nor comprehend endless duration, and yet I never dreamed of offering this as a valid reason for denying either the one or the other. It were then as manifestly absurd to contend that there is no God, because I cannot comprehend the fulness of his infinite nature, as it would be to argue that there can be no such distance as a mile, because a Gunter's chain will not measure it at once. The truth is, if the chain would measure it, it would be no longer a mile. So if my faculties could comprehend the Creator, he would be no longer

Sound philosophy recognises the existence of a God notwithstanding his being is not fully comprehended, and enlightened reason acknowledges him as creation's Lord and Maker. I know that men have in these latter days, discarded the idea of a God, professedly upon the authority of reason and philosophy. But in my humble opinion it is a philosophy which overlooks the plainest principles of truth; and a reason, that denies conclusions resulting from the most obvious facts. *True* philosophy teaches man his own ignorance, and acknowledges her inability to unfold all the mysteries of creation; and sound reason lays the richest trophies of her victories over ignorance, at the feet of him who rules over all. But this pretended philosophy which denies the Lord of heaven and earth, would flatter human pride and make a pigmy mortal to think himself the only wise: and this boasted reason would exalt itself above all that is called God on the earth.

It remains to apply our subject thus far, to the main object of these lectures, which, as I have more than once stated, is to prove the truth of the Sacred Scriptures. The argument is this. The Scriptures teach, that there is a God who created the human family, and endued them with all their powers both of body and mind. If then I have proved this to be the only rational and true method of accounting for man's existence, with the same certainty I have proved that so much of the Bible as teaches this doctrine is truth. It will perhaps be said, that there *may* be a God, and yet that the Bible is not a revelation from Him. Have it so if you choose. But I present you with the fact that there *is* a God, sustained as it is by the clearest and plainest teachings of reason, and I have a right to claim your assent to its truth, thus far. "There is a God all

nature cries aloud," and when David said, "it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves," he told a sober truth. Whether David or some other person wrote these psalms, I will not pause to inquire. But I contend that the writer, whoever he may have been, and the other writers of Scripture, be they whom you please, give us the only reasonable account of the origin of man, that ever has been given. When they founded their doctrines, and the obligations of obedience to moral precepts, upon the principle that God is our Creator, they begun like workmen who need not to be ashamed of their work. They laid the foundation upon an eternal rock against which the floods of infidelity beat in vain.

DISCOURSE IV.

POWER AND WISDOM OF GOD.

Behold, God is mighty, and despiseth not any; He is mighty in strength and wisdom. Job xxxvi. 5.

My previous discourses have been designed to show that the testimony of Scripture in relation to the existence of God, who is the Creator of all things, is sustained and sanctioned by the voice of nature, reason, and true philosophy. How far I have succeeded in this attempt, it becomes not me to say. I am sensible that it is a boundless field, and that I should be under the necessity of leaving much of it unexplored, even were I to protract my labours beyond the limits of your patience. I have therefore merely glanced at some of its more prominent features, and must leave you to reflect at your leisure. I have concluded that there is, and there must be a God. I am now prepared to proceed one step further, by an attempt to prove that the attributes which the Scriptures ascribe to God are such as reason approves and nature sanctions.

I. The Bible teaches that God is Almighty.

Throughout the whole of its instructions it represents Him as being in the undivided possession of power that yields to no control, and pauses at no obstacles that may stand in the way of its mighty workings. In this respect, the God of the Bible differs from all other gods. I believe there is no one, in all the catalogue of pagan deities, for whom his worshippers claim omnipotence,

in the same sense in which the Scriptures ascribe it to God. The Romans had a god to whom they gave the title of "*pater omnipotens*," or omnipotent father, and yet it would seem, that they intended by this to convey the idea that he was more powerful than any other of their gods, rather than that he was absolutely and strictly omnipotent. It requires but a limited acquaintance with their mythology to know, that though they *called* him omnipotent, yet they believed his power was often thwarted, in a greater or less degree, and sometimes completely baffled, in the execution of his purposes. But it is not so with the representations of Deity contained in the Bible. Whatever his arm findeth to do is done, and no obstacle can hinder for one moment the progress of his work. He utters his authoritative mandate and the heavens and the earth hear and obey. He speaks and it is done; he commands and it stands fast. These are the views of God's power which pervade the testimony of the patriarchs, prophets and apostles; nor do they once appear to have harboured the thought that any thing could be too great for God to do. The point to which I direct your attention is, that these are reasonable and just conceptions of God.

I deem it unnecessary to dwell at great length upon this part of the subject, for the evidences of God's mighty power are so conspicuously exhibited on the face of nature around us, that they cannot escape the notice of the most superficial observer. Admitting the truth of the position which I have laboured to establish that God exists, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that he is omnipotent. It is a fixed principle in philosophy, that the stream cannot rise higher than the fountain, or an effect be superior to its cause. If therefore it

is admitted, that there is a God, who is the fountain of all things, and the first cause of their existence, it must necessarily follow, that he is superior to all things, and able to control all the effects of his own power. It were perfectly unreasonable to suppose that God would or could create any thing superior to himself, or bring into existence any power or combination of powers which should rise above the might of his creating arm. But not to insist upon this; the magnitude and the extent of creation's works speak of a power in their Creator and Governor, vastly above the grasp of man's feeble intellect. Reflect for one moment upon the stupendous fabric of the universe. Look at the lofty mountain whose hoary head is reared above the clouds, and think of the power which piled its ponderous rocks and fashioned its rugged sides. Go, stand by the side of the ocean, whose waves lash the shore, and whose billows laugh at man's puny efforts for their control; and think of that voice which is able to say with authority that must be obeyed, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." Then muse upon the earth in its vast extent, its wonderful movements, and its onward and still onward course; and think of the power that weigheth the mountains in scales and the dust in a balance; that moulded the earth in the hollow of his hand, and hurled it from his throne to pursue the even tenor of its way about the sun for ages on ages, with strict obedience to its Creator's will. To work these wonders would require power more than tongue can express or imagination conceive. But what are these? They are but the beginning of the ways of God. That towering mountain before which the beholder stands with feelings of awe, is in fact an elevation so inconsiderable,

that it would escape the notice of the eye t survey the earth at a glance. The rolling oc all its vast extent, is but the drop of a buc compared with the universe, and the earth its speck, an atom in the immensity of creation. yond this nether world, suns and planets roll tems on systems move obedient to the Creat and such is their magnitude and number, th the earth from the map of existence, would b extinguishing of a taper in the midst of a suns. I ask you to reflect upon these thi nating as they all do in God, the author of al me if the Bible does but repeat the voice of n reason, when it says that "*power* belongeth u Surely to ascribe the origin and governmen worlds and systems of worlds to a weak or God, is to violate common sense, and ove plainest principles of philosophical investi therefore conclude that there is truth in the which teach the omnipotence of God, and that no one who believes in a God, or is will mit his existence, will deny his power, I di part of the subject and remark

II. The Scriptures teach that God is uns in wisdom.

I use the term wisdom to denote the highe tion of knowledge, embracing not merely t zance of things as they are, and a knowled end from the beginning, but that consumn which in the right use of knowledge adapts ends with such infallible precision that there sibility of a failure or disappointment. This is and the Scriptures every where teach, that i to God, and dwells richly and fully in him al

doubtless aware, that the heathen world represent
r gods as committing various mistakes, and fre-
itly failing of the accomplishment of their designs.
ack of wisdom in the choice of means for the at-
ment of a given end. But it is not so with the God
he Bible. His knowledge pervades and compre-
ds all things, and his wisdom chooses, and his
er applies, those means which are invariably suc-
ful in the accomplishment of the desired end. My
ct is to show that this doctrine of the Bible is also
doctrine of reason, nature and providence.

Let us hear the voice of reason.

here is no doubt, that knowledge and wisdom do
ally exist. However limited our knowledge, there
some things which we do know, and however er-
our wisdom, yet some small share of it falls to the
of man. The question is, how came man to be
e? There are one of two things which must be
rded as infallibly certain. Either wisdom has ex-
d from all past eternity, or there was a time when
e was no wisdom. If we say there was a time
n there was no wisdom, the question arises, what
se was capable of originating such an effect? I
k I have before shown, that there are no laws of
ter which are capable of producing knowledge,
ight or wisdom, and hence it will become necessary
ook for this cause in something else, rather than in
e matter. A modern infidel has put forth his creed
his form: "I believe there is no knowledge where
e is no sense, and no sense without bodily organ-
ion, and hence that bodily organization is the cause
not the effect of knowledge." I quote from mem-
and may not have quoted the precise language, but
ink I have preserved the substance of the creed.

How dead matter without the least sense or knowledge could arrange itself into a bodily organization capable of producing sense and thought and wisdom, is a mystery which must be explained by wiser heads than mine. I confess that such knowledge is too deep for me. According to my imperfect conceptions of things it would require some knowledge, and not a little wisdom, to take blind, dead, senseless, thoughtless matter, and move and arrange it in a bodily organization sufficiently nice to originate sense, thought and knowledge. If bodily organization is the cause of knowledge, we have still a right to ask, what is the cause of bodily organization? It is either the effect of pre-existent knowledge, or it originated in mere chance. But we have before proved that neither chance nor the laws of matter could produce such an organization and cause it to think and reason. Hence we conclude that wisdom and knowledge have existed from eternity. The tree is known by its fruit, and the fountain by the waters that it sends forth. If the fruit is knowledge, so is the tree; if the streams are wise so must be the fountain. It were as unreasonable as it is unphilosophical to say, that all those streams of knowledge that so richly water the earth, flow from a fountain in which there is nothing but the blindness of ignorance. The conclusion of reason is, that the source from which all knowledge and wisdom proceed, must itself be wise and knowing, and that too, in a greater degree than any of his creatures. To me at least it is evident, that it takes knowledge to produce knowledge, and hence from all eternity there must have been knowledge, else man would not possess it, for it exists in man not as an original cause, but an effect of some cause. If therefore wisdom is eternal, in whom has it existed from

ity? Not in man surely, for he is but of yester-
but in God, who alone is eternal. There is so
ı of good sense and true philosophy in the words
h the wise man puts into the mouth of wisdom,
hey accord so perfectly with the conclusion above
n, that I cannot forbear ,uoting the passage. In
ighth chapter of Proverbs wisdom is personified
nade to speak after this manner: "The Lord pos-
d me in the beginning of his way, before his works
l. I was set up from everlasting, from the begin-
or ever the earth was. * * When he prepared the
ens, I was there. When he set a compass upon
ace of the depths; when he established the clouds
e; when he strengthened the fountains of the deep;
ı he gave the sea his decree, that the waters should
pass his commandment; when he appointed the
dations of the earth; *then* I was by him, as one
ght up with him, and I was daily his delight, re-
ng always before him." Thus the Bible teaches
eternal wisdom of God, and enlightened reason
tions the word.

I propose to examine the works of nature for the pur-
of showing that they also teach the wisdom of God.
here is no better way of viewing any matter of
:h we desire to obtain clear and correct notions,
in the contrast with its opposite. May I not then
llowed to attempt a contrast between that wisdom
:h appears in creation, and the foolishness of man
s wisest operations? It is especially worthy of
ırk in the outset, that all those productions of hu-
skill which exhibit the wisdom of man in its ut-
t profundity, have their patterns in the works of
: and the nearer they approximate the original the
ter is their perfection and utility. Take as an ex-

ample, that wonderful instrument the telesc
know its invention was hailed as a triumph
wisdom over the obstacles that the immensit
had reared full and impassable in the way
progress in knowledge. And yet every m
that it is but copied from an eye, and that it
with infinitely less perfection upon the sam
ical and philosophical principles, and owes
only to its resemblance of the original patter
the works of God. The same is true of t
works of art which from time to time have e
admiration of the world. Men have prided t
upon that wisdom which has enabled them t
a ship to sail the ocean, and thus triumph o
stacles that the deep waters interposed agai
tercourse of man with his fellow man. Bu
take the most gallant ship that ever ploughed
and if you inquire why it leaves its compe
hind, the mariner will tell you it is b
builder had wisdom enough to take his c
silly goose, which God Almighty had made
upon the waters. So it is with every effor
wisdom, in all the arts. The whole syst
chanical powers must look to nature and c
it owes its existence and perfection to patterns
in the works of God. So of the noble arts
and sculpture. God made the original, and
a trembling, erring hand, sketches out a c
noblest efforts of genius in the arts, the fine
of the painter's pencil or the sculptor's c
never been able to produce any thing more
resemblances in colour and form of the wor
And yet man boasts of wisdom on account
rude and half-finished works.

t it is not the arts alone that must bow and con-
he superior wisdom of God. The sciences too,
age philosophy at their head, must bend in meek
ission before him, and confess that their highest
s have only been able to trace out those lines that
long been marked by the finger of God. The
has admired the wisdom of Newton; and as a
no doubt he was wise. But what after all did
on do, or what has philosophy ever done? Sim-
nis. She has examined the works of God and
vered a handful of facts concerning them. Nearly
ousand years had the earth rolled upon her axis
vound her circles round the sun, and yet foolish
did not know it. Newton with a giant mind
l out its course, and the world calls him wise!
f it is wisdom to follow on in a path which has
trod for six thousand years, how unsearchable are
epths of that wisdom which dwells in God, who,
gh the trackless immensity of space, first marked
path with his finger, and launched the ponderous
from his throne to pursue her winding way for
without a hair's breadth of deviation? But I
this view of the subject and come to a more close
ination of the works of nature, or rather of na-
s God, as affording clear proof of astonishing wis-

here are in the solar system a number of planets,
ceiving light and heat from one grand source, the
The object to be obtained is, that all these plan-
ay receive in all their parts, light and heat from
ountain. Now look at the means which are em-
ed to secure this object. The sun is placed in the
e, and that is precisely the spot where it should be
cure the desired end, by the most easy and natural

process. But the work is not yet done. The s
planets are now formed, and stand immoveable i
places. You readily perceive that only one s
them would receive the sun's rays. The obje
is to enlighten them on all sides, and the means
God has employed for this purpose are the be
ginable: To move the sun round each of the pla
such a manner as to enlighten all sides woul
been impossible, for in that case there must hav
as many suns as planets. How then is the e
tained? Simply by giving to each planet a
motion on its axis. By this simple process eac
is presented to the sun in its turn, and feels the w
of his genial rays. But there is another difficult
met. The materials of the earth needed the pow
attraction, in order to keep its several parts comp
This attraction would have drawn the earth to t
had there been nothing to counterbalance its infl
The object now is to preserve it at its proper di
from the sun, and the means are at hand. God
it a projectile movement, by which it acquires
trifugal force, exactly sufficient to counterbalan
tendency to the sun. So nicely and exactly do
momentum correspond with the amount of attr
power, that for ages man has not been able to di
any sensible deviation from that line in which it
at first. Again, had the axis of the earth been di
perpendicular to the plain of its orbit, in some
eternal winter would have reigned in all its ho
in others, perpetual spring; and still in others, the
of autumn. The object is to produce the pleasi
riety of the seasons; and for this purpose the
stands inclined to the plane of the ecliptic. B
simple expedient, even the poles are in turn el

with the warmth of summer, and all the delightful changes of the seasons are effected. Had this inclination of the earth's axis been greater than it is, the changes would have been sudden from extreme heat to extreme cold, and had it been less, the changes would have been too slow and small for the purposes of vegetation, especially in the northern and southern climes. But as it is, how consummate the wisdom displayed. The atheist may mock and ridicule the idea of an all-wise and intelligent Creator; but if there is truth in existence, if our senses are not mediums of deception, then there was a workman employed in the construction of this vast machine, who knew how to adapt means to ends with a simplicity and efficiency that cannot fail or err. But I pass on.

I will take the wisest man on earth. I will suppose that you are that man, and along with your wisdom you are possessed of almighty power, capable of calling into existence whatever you please. I will say no more of the wisdom displayed in the formation of the earth, or in its exact and due proportion of distance from the sun, its motion, seasons, day and night, and all that field of wonders. I pass these, and suppose you have created just such a world as this is, and the next thing is to people it. You wish to put on to its surface about eight hundred millions of human beings, and say five thousand times that number of inferior animals. They must be so made that all parts of the earth shall minister to their necessities, and there shall be nothing superfluous and nothing lacking. They must have eyes so constructed that they can see with the measure of light that the sun yields at this particular distance. They must have bodies fitted to the temperature or they will freeze or burn. Those who

live in air must have lungs suited to the der
air or they will die. So also they must
suited to the construction of their bodies, and
not be so made that they will all desire or
food, for they could not obtain it; and a thou
things of a like nature must be taken into co
or the plan will fail. Besides all this, th
fitted to live in different places, for they can
in one place. Some must live in the air, c
not be inhabited; some in the water, or the
desolate; some on the fertile plains; some on
tains, and some on the rocks, or in the ca
earth; and others still must crawl in the
day by day, these all must be fed and pro
the means of prolonging an existence. And
the several kinds from becoming extinct, all
be so organized that when they "shuffle off
coil," they may leave their posterity behind, t
places. Now I desire you in sober earnest
wisdom to the task, and see if you can devis
to do this better than God has done it. I
could you devise a plan that would by any
complish all this? Need I say it were ir
Nay, for yourselves also know, that all the
every man that ever lived, could it be conc
one single individual, would fail before the
of a work so vastly and incomprehensibly
grasp of his powers. And yet God has pe
these wonders, and the story of his wisdom
begun. Let us briefly review the ground th
passed over. I have said that a being dev
dom would as soon have made the sun to go
earth, as the earth to revolve on its axis, a
its different sides to the sun, and the effect

ıat there must have been as many suns as there planets. An ignorant being or blind chance as soon have given to the earth a momentum ould have sent it spinning in a tangent, beyond ed stars, to freeze with eternal cold, as to have ted its momentum by its gravitation in such a r, that its orbit should lie exactly in the place the warmth of the sun would keep it in a proper ature.

ignorant being or blind chance would as soon ent the earth to wander beyond the orbit of the ium Sidus, where perpetual night to all its in- nts would have reigned, and where streams and would have ceased to flow, and the ocean itself mass of ice. Ignorance or chance would as ave done this as to place it precisely at the dis- where the proportion of heat it contained and the ature of its materials and inhabitants required should be. If the earth were created and an nt or unwise being was about to people it with d intelligence, that ignorant creator would as soon itted those beings to live on the planet Jupiter as earth. He would as soon have made them in manner that they would require twice the heat p them from freezing that now keeps them warm any other way; or would as soon have given eyes of such a construction that they could not thout double the light we now have, as to have ucted that delicate organ to correspond with the re of light the sun yields. Is there no wisdom this? Tell us ye wise ones, who believe the universe to be a void waste of ignorance, save little knowledge man possesses; tell us who but of wisdom is sufficient for these things? These

are but a few imperfect notices of the wisdon
that shines out from every page of the great
nature, which is always open before us. Bu
well pause here as any where, for there is
the subject. All creation is full of the wisd
author. From the broad canopy above to the
object on earth, from man to the meanest re
grovels on the dust beneath our feet, there is
terrupted chain of evidence, all tending to s
position, that in their formation there was
wisdom compared with which the boasted k
of man is but foolishness. Were we to c
with an examination of the Behemoth of the
or the Leviathan of the mighty deep, we sl
the plainest indications of the same all-kno
dom; and descending in the scale of being d
to the minutest insect that flits in the summe
we should find in that, and in every intermedi
the footsteps of the same God and the visil
forth of the same infinite knowledge. But
and from the full convictions of my judgm
with one of old—"His wisdom is infinite, a
no searching of his understanding."

We have concluded that God is powerful
and the question will now be agitated, wha
to do with the truth or falsity of the Scrip
answer: the Scriptures teach the existence
and they uniformly represent *that* God as a
sessed of almighty power and infinite wi
therefore I have proved that wisdom and pow
to God, with the same certainty I have prove
Scriptures are true which teach these doctri
sceptic may lift his menacing hand against
hood and denounce the Bible as a book of j

ıningly-devised fable, and bid stout defiance to all uths. But one thing I will tell you; priests did nake the universe, nor did they teach the sun and and earth and waters what language to speak. no. The lessons written there were written by inger of the Creator; and standing as I am con- is I do upon the immoveable basis of immortal , I present you with the stubborn fact, that the ptures and the works of nature hold forth the same uage and bear united testimony to the mighty er and wisdom of God; and if you deny the one must deny the other, and if you believe the one you t believe the other also. I present you with the e which teaches and lays the foundation of all its rines upon the position that there is an all-powerful an all-wise God, and I call on the heavens and the ı, the seas and fountains of water, and all that in ı are, to bear witness to its truth. You may call book what you will, but these truths you cannot throw. They are written upon the stars, and ıped with the indelible impress of God's forming l upon the face of every thing that our eyes behold. movements of the heavenly bodies in the firma- t above, the revolutions of the earth, the alternate ession of day and night, and the changes of the ons, the inhabitants of the earth with all that in- erable multitude of beings that walk upon its sur- creep in its dark bosom and sport in its deep ers, or cut the ambient air; all these with their tation to their appropriate spheres, and the pro- ons for their comfort, speak in language too plain e misunderstood, the existence, the power and the lom of God. These are not the words of decep- nor do they come from juggling priests or base

impostures. They come fresh from the vo
ture, and drop in holy accents from the heav
sound from every mountain and rock and plai

Here again I may be met with the obj
there may be a wise and powerful God a
Bible may not be a revelation from him. I re
what I have more than once said, I am not c
about names. All I contend is, that it is tru
ever may be its origin, I maintain that it tea
naked and incontrovertible truth. I point
doctrine of an omniscient and omnipotent
Creator of all things. I lay before you the B
teaches this as its fundamental principle. I
to the most indubitable proof in the works c
which stare you in the face, that such a Go
ist, and in the name of consistency and re
mand, and have a right to demand, your asse
of the fundamental principles of Bible theol
the existence; second, the power; and thire
dom of God.

Perhaps the deist of the more moderate stan
disposed to object after this manner. He b
a God, and confesses that his power and w
conspicuously exhibited upon the face of na
deed they are so plainly displayed there, tha
tion is unnecessary and useless. I answe
The heavenly bodies moved in the same o
the days of Newton and the invention of the
that they do now, and yet man did not find it
no man will contend that the writings of N
useless because the enlightened philosophe
and trace out the movement of the heave
So here there is no propriety in saying that t
useless simply because the enlightened Chr

trace out the character of God in nature. The world was as profoundly ignorant of God, before the introduction of the Bible as it was of the true motion of the heavenly bodies before the days of Newton. When Newton made known his theory, facts that had hitherto remained unnoticed or unexplained rose up and testified to its truth. In like manner, when the Bible had revealed the true character of God, ten thousand facts rose up and declared that it was even so. Since Newton's day, it is an easy matter to prove that the earth is globular, and the sun stationary instead of moving about the earth. With his discoveries before us, we easily trace out the orbits of the heavenly bodies and tell the times and seasons of each. The Bible is nature's interpreter, and when once it informs us, that there is a God of power omnipotent, and wisdom unsearchable, we can then see in things that were before unexplained, the wonders of his power and the infinity of his wisdom. But was it ever done without the Bible? Let Moloch's brazen god and India's cursed Juggernaut answer that question. Nay, let a long line of sages who with all the science of earth have lived and died profoundly ignorant of God, tell us that it is to the Bible and the Bible alone we are indebted for the light of truth in relation to the being and the character of God.

I am perfectly willing to grant, that there are deists who entertain tolerably just views of God, and appealing to nature, they will discourse of his perfections in terms that would do honour to a Christian. But when they claim these as their own discoveries and contend that they learned them from nature, without the aid of revelation, we must beg leave to dissent. That they are not original interpretations of nature's voice is evi-

dent from the fact that even such views of God as deists advocate were strangers on earth until they came in the Bible, and that even now they are unknown the world over, save where the Bible is known and read. Suffer me to tell you, that had it not been for that Bible which you despise, *you*, who now boast of philosophy and adore the God of nature, would have been where your fathers were, and where your brethren now are, groping in the darkness of pagan idolatry, and bowing before stocks and stones. Where is the nation which has learned from nature, without the aid of the Bible, to worship the God of the modern deist? There is no such nation under heaven. The truth is, the deist has been raised from the darkness of idolatry and ignorance by the influence of the Bible. He has been educated under the warm and enlivening rays of that light which shines from the sacred volume, and all that is good or true in his theory of God is borrowed, nay, stolen, from the sacred book; and now, having grown wise in his own conceit, he turns and with viper fang wounds the benefactor who has warmed and cherished him. But let this pass.

To the existence of such a God as I have described there is still another objection that deserves a passing notice. It is said that we can form no just conceptions of any being having power and intelligence distinct from matter, or that we can know nothing of a spiritual existence. No one can tell *what* God is, or explain the mode of his existence. We see man, for he is material and tangible, and we know what he is, but we cannot see a spirit and therefore can know nothing about such a being. To this I reply, that we know nothing about matter, save its qualities and effects. We know precisely as much of the nature of mind or spirit

as we do of matter. What do we know about matter? Why we know a few of its qualities. If I were to ask you what matter is, you would say that it is any thing that has solidity, inertness, &c. But what is the real essence of the thing itself, is a subject upon which we are as profoundly ignorant as we are of the inhabitants of the planets. Now we know some of the qualities of mind. It reasons and thinks, and we see its effects, but of the thing itself, and the mode of its existence, we have no knowledge. But did any man ever deny the existence of matter because he could find out nothing more about it than some of its qualities? Why then should we deny the existence of God because we can know no more of him than what we discover in his works and the effects of his power. Who by searching can find out God? is a question which has been made the pretext of much scepticism. Who by searching can find out matter? is another question upon which men do not seem to have reflected. I can tell you as definitely what God is as you can tell me what matter is. What is matter? Why it is a substance that has form and extension, and inertness and solidity. Well what constitutes the real essence of the thing itself? There you must stop. What is God? I answer, he is a being who possesses wisdom and power and goodness. Well, what constitutes the essence of this being? There *I* must stop. But mind you, if my inability to answer your question is a good reason why you should reject the existence of God, then I contend, that your inability to answer my question, is precisely as good a reason why *I* should reject the existence of matter. Come, let us compromise this business. I confess that I know nothing of the omniscient mind save its qualities and operations. You must confess that you know

nothing of matter save its qualities and operation
its real essence you are as profoundly ignoran
am of the nature of God. Why then do you b
that there is any matter in the universe? It is b
you know some of its properties. Do you ask
believe there is a God in heaven? I answer, becau
cognise the attributes and operations of the Eterna
in the works of nature around me. I behold th
ders of his power, and the unsearchable depths
wisdom exercised and displayed, in the constr
and movement of the vast machine of the univer
it is credulity in me to believe in God upon su
dence as this, then it is also credulity in you to b
that there is matter, upon the same kind of evi
for be it remembered, that all you know or can
of matter, is its properties, and of the substance
thing itself, you are, and must ever be, utterly ign

* See note F.

DISCOURSE V.

DIVINE BENEVOLENCE.

The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.

PSALMS XXXIII. 5.

THE subject of this discourse will be readily suggested to your minds by the text. It is the goodness of God. Those who are familiar with the contents of the Bible, are aware that God is therein said to be good, and this doctrine is perhaps more emphatically and repeatedly set forth than any other. There is also one circumstance connected with it that renders it peculiarly interesting. I allude to the fact, that this goodness is declared to be as extensive as the works of his hands. In this particular the goodness of that God which the Bible presents as the object of our adoration, differs materially from what is ascribed to any other god that man ever worshipped or feared. Heathens call their gods *good*, but you will always observe that their goodness is confined within narrow limits, or is of very questionable character. It is not so with the God of the Bible. "He is good to all and his tender mercies are over all his works." The whole earth is full of that goodness, and from its impartial favour no creature is an outcast. Moreover, he is good in a higher and holier sense than any other being. While in the character of all inteliigent creatures, there are mingled shades of good and ill, in him there is naught

to detract from the infinite fulness and glory
adorable goodness. The object of this discour
show that this doctrine of the Bible bears an harm
correspondence to the teachings of nature, as pr
in the visible works of creation, and also to the
of experience, gathered from the dealings of
providence with the creatures of his power. I
able to show you that the goodness of God is ta
nature and providence, I shall then have succe
proving that one more of the pillars in the ter
the gospel, is based upon a rock that cannot be
I now proceed to the work before me.

I. I am to show that *nature* teaches the g
of God.

In looking about me upon the fair face of nat
evidence of the divine goodness, I have been a
to decide where to commence. It is somewh
standing under the clear firmament in the eveni
searching for a star that excels in brightness
the thousands that sparkle in the vault of heav
the midst of so many arguments which are fi
clear to the point, it is difficult to select those th
be most convincing to my auditors. I may perl
well begin with a general survey of the field bef

I remark then, that every evidence of desig
in the works of God, is also an evidence of hi
ness, and hence the goodness of God is inseparab
nected with every manifestation of his wisdo
power. That which will prove the one will pr
other also. Take an instance which shall ill
this remark. I have pointed you to the solar s
and particularly to the earth; its distance from t
its motion, form, light, and its adaptation to the
of its inhabitants, as evidences of design and

ı the part of the Creator. Now these are equally ex-
icit in their testimony to his goodness. Whatever
'design or intelligence they exhibit, is seen engaged
. the production of a benevolent end. If God had
een malevolent, he would have so constructed the
rth that it would have been the abode of misery. He
ight have made every sense of its inhabitants, and
very circumstance of earth, calculated to inflict mis-
y and pain, and these circumstances and senses might
ave been so perfectly well adapted to the end, that
esign would have been apparent; still it would have
een a *bad* design. But in vain will you search the
orks of God for any train of contrivance which ex-
ibits a settled design to produce an evil result. So
ntirely are these works calculated for the production
f happiness, that no mortal man can suggest any im-
rovements by which the amount of enjoyment would
n the whole be increased, or the sum of misery dimin-
hed. In every department of creation, things are to
e found, arranged in such order as to afford clear proof
f design; but in no case does the design appear to
ave evil for its object. I grant, that there are instan-
es in which apparent evil is discovered; but I main-
in, that there is no case where that apparent evil is
e ultimatum or end of the design, indicated by the
ntrivance. In all cases it appears as an incidental
rcumstance, necessarily and unavoidably connected
ith the means employed for effecting the good; and
vastly inferior in amount to the ultimate good,
hich results from these means. Take for instance,
ose provisions which God has made for watering the
rth, with the rains that descend upon the just and
e unjust. The rains descend and vegetation flour-
hes; and to the candid mind it is evident that its

design is, to water the earth and "cause it to bud
bring forth, that it might give seed to the sower
bread to the eater." But for this provision of na
God, death and famine would reign over all the
and its most fertile plains would have been long
left in dreary solitude without an inhabitant. It
vious then, that there is a vast and incalculable an
of good resulting from the descending showers;
if there is any design about the matter, it is a goo
sign. But it sometimes happens that the rain des
in torrents, and an individual exposed, may be dren
and suffer sickness in consequence of his expo
But he must be a very short-sighted man indeed,
would contend that the rain was designed particu
to subject him to pain. There are also cases in w
the rain falls in such abundance that the stream
augmented beyond the capacity of their banks;
overflow, and some fields are laid waste and, per
even human life destroyed. But who ever thoug
regarding these as the ultimate objects contemp
by the Creator in the rains of heaven? Will any
presume to say, that God provided rain on purpos
there might be now and then an inundation? I
not; for it is but moderate reason which looks
these only as incidental circumstances, and excep
to the general object contemplated in the design.
it is but simple justice which admits, "in God'
half," that the good resulting from the rains is
more abundant than any thing that wears the ap
ance of evil. Hence every link in the chain of
trivance, clearly indicates that the plan was fo
not for any thing desirable in the incidental evil
in special reference to the ultimate good. Nor do
incidental evil (if you please to call it a real evi

tract aught from the goodness of the being who formed the plan. Before such a principle can be admitted, it must be proved that there is some better plan which might have been adopted for the production of the same end. When any object is to be secured, it is goodness that out of a number of possible means selects the best. In this case, before any one presumes to complain of the Creator's plan, or urge any of its seeming imperfections, as an argument against the divine goodness, it would be well for him to cast about and see if he can devise a better. Or if he cannot do this, to devise some means by which, in consistency with all the circumstances of the case, he could avoid the incidental evil of which he complains, without producing a greater. When any man will propose a method for watering the face of the earth, which shall be better adapted to the purpose, and liable to fewer objections, than the one God has adopted, then it will be soon enough to urge any supposed defects, as an argument against the divine goodness. I have a mind to inquire what mode you would adopt, if you had the power, which should be in any way superior to the one God has adopted? To let the rains cease would be the destruction of all the inhabitants of the earth, and to abolish any one of the laws of nature, by virtue of which the vapours rise and the rains fall, would be productive of equally disastrous consequences. It should be recollected that God "acts by general, not by partial laws," and it is too much to expect ever of God, that he should interpose with a miracle to suspend for a while the operation of useful and necessary laws in order to avoid some trifling inconveniences, which after all, may be turned to a good account. One or two considerations which are perfectly obvious will place this subject in its

proper light. I will still keep the illustration already before you in view, though the remarks I am about to make are equally applicable to many others. The rain comes down from heaven and waters the earth, causing the small blade to spring up, and producing the full ear and the ripened corn for the garner. But the objector thinks that an occasional flood or other ill ought to be abated from the goodness of God who formed the plan. Now rain is produced by the simplest laws of matter. The vapour being raised by heat is lighter than the air, and of course floats in it. It is wafted over the earth until it condenses and from its own gravity falls to the surface. Thus the whole process is carried on by the first, and simplest laws of matter. Now it is worthy of remark, that it would be manifestly absurd for God to introduce some law into matter for the special purpose of producing rain, when there were already those in existence which would effect the end desired. Such an idea would not harmonize with that wonderful simplicity which characterizes all the operations of his works. You see then, that the primitive laws of matter, even those that regulate the motion of the earth, and the changing seasons, are fully adequate to the production of necessary rain, and while these laws are in force, the rains will come at their appointed seasons.

It was not only necessary, that these laws should exist but it was equally necessary, that they should be constant in their operations. What would man be, if he could not confide in the steadfastness of nature's laws? He would be a poor helpless worm of the dust, who could not feel secure for a moment. If the fire made him warm for once, he could have no surety, that it would do so again. If he planted corn and it grew, for once, and gave him a harvest, he would have no con-

fidence that it would be so again; or if the rain came down and watered the earth, he would have no good reason to hope for a recurrence of the same event. In fact every lesson of experience would be lost, for all these lessons are founded upon our steadfast confidence in the undeviating uniformity of the operations of God's work. The mariner would never venture from the shore, but for the full and perfect confidence, that the winds and the waves will continue obedient to the same laws to which they have yielded for ages. The husbandman would never cast his seed into the earth, but for his confidence that nature, true to herself, will in due season return him the golden harvest. Nay, more, we should not dare step upon the solid earth in the morning, were it not for our confidence, that the same law by which it has hitherto sustained us, is still in operation. You see then how indispensable it is for man to know, that nature walks by rules that know no abatement. Now we come to the point of the argument. The ills of which you complain as incidental to the falling rains, proceed from this very constancy and uniformity in the laws of nature. Do you ask, why there are now and then excessive rains? The answer is, because nature true to herself, has been at work, and what has been drawn into the atmosphere, by the laws of matter, during those days in which you delighted, must by the same laws fall to the earth. Do you ask why a good God does not suspend the operation of these laws, when there is danger to be apprehended? I answer: because a good God knows, that a suspension of these laws, in one solitary instance, would destroy that confidence in their stability and uniformity, without which man would be the prey of perpetual fear, and thus it would entail upon him the

most deadly curse that imagination itself can conceive. It appears then, that the evils of which you complain, in this instance, are rather, on the whole, imaginary than real, being abundantly compensated in the very circumstances from which they flow. But even if it were allowed that the evil was real, and considerable, yet if the good were more abundant, the argument would bear strongly in favour of goodness, in that being who "drew the wondrous plan." No man, I presume, will dispute, that the blessings conferred by the descending showers are incalculably superior to any thing, that wears the appearance of evil, emenating from the same fountain; and hence, my position is tenable, that the rain from heaven indicates the divine goodness. The same general remarks will hold good when referred to the shining of the sun, the changes of the seasons, the alternation of day and night, and a thousand other instances of wise arrangement by which God promotes the welfare of his creatures. They all speak forth the same boundless and impartial goodness, that drops in the rain and distils in the dew. True, there may be apparent incidental ills connected with them, but these ills are not the end sought, nor do they abate aught from the benevolence of him who formed the plan. The heat of the sun is sometimes found oppressive, but it were a foolish man who would wish to annihilate the sun, on that account; and equally foolish would that man be, who would allege this oppressive heat, as a reason for supposing, that the sun was made by a malevolent being on purpose to give him pain. The truth is, in all these cases, the end is good, and all of evil that can be discovered, is only the necessary accompaniment of the means. The rule is good, and it is the exception only, that wears the form of evil.

If therefore, God for the best of purposes permits the exception to enter, it militates not against his goodness.

But I observe again; the goodness of God may be seen in the provisions which he has made for the happiness of all his sentient creatures. There is not in the wide earth, a race of beings, which God has brought into existence, without providing them with means of enjoyment to the full measure of their capacities. He has been as careful to provide suitable and appropriate means for the comfort of the meanest insect that crawls in the dust, as for the most noble animal that walks the earth. You know there is an innumerable multitude of animals on the earth. Some walk upon its surface, some creep in its bosom, some sport in its waters, and some soar in the air: but for them all, God has provided means of support and sources of enjoyment. They are all fitted to their spheres and apparently happy, and contented in the condition, in which God has placed them, and with the provisions which he has made for them. The lion is happy in the solitudes of the desert, and to all appearance as well pleased with his condition as the lamb, that sports upon the flowery lawn. In the cheerless and forbidding desert, he finds the means of gratifying his ruling propensities, and is pleased to dwell where none will dispute with him the title of "monarch of the wood." So I might go on, and descending downward through all, that "stately tread or lowly creep," I should find, that God has given to one and to all the means of a happy existence. Reflect for one moment upon the vast and untold multitude of animals, there are now upon the earth. And how many are there who are not at this instant in a state of enjoyment? There are no doubt individual cases of suffering, but compared with

the vast whole these are but as spots upon the fair disk of the sun. Think of the countless myriads, who are now happy to their hearts' content, and what an amount of enjoyment must be borne upon the wings of every fleeting moment as it passes! The air and the earth and the sea are full of life, and yet such is the tender care of the great Creator, that all are happy in their appropriate spheres. No man can lay his finger upon a race of animals, and say with any show of propriety, that their existence has been a curse. Nay, I go still further, and even hazard the assertion that you cannot find an individual, of any species, of whom it may not be said, in truth, at the close of its life, "the joy has triumphed over the pain." What do these things prove? They prove, that the Author of all life is good. They lay open a rule of his divine government, to which there are no exceptions, and proclaim in most emphatic tones, that when God puts forth the energies of his power, to confer life, it is in all cases, for the benevolent purpose of swelling the amount of happiness and joy. Look at this matter in another light. It would have been just as easy for God to frame his creatures in such a manner that they would all be miserable, as it was to make them as they are. He might have made them so, that they should drag out a miserable existence of the keenest torture, with no ray of light to shine upon the darkness of their wo; and the work would have been as easy of performance as that which he has already done. In such a case no man would hesitate for a moment to say, that he was cruel. Why then, I ask, should any man now hesitate to say that he is good?

There is another circumstance connected with the animal economy of nature, that ought not to be passed

over, or forgotten. I refer to the fact, that God has *added* to all animals sources of pleasure, over and above, what was necessary for the purpose of prolonging life. As a case in point: if he had merely provided food for animals, it would have been sufficient for the support of life. But God has done more than this. He has not only given food and an appetite for food, but he has so provided, that the act of eating affords pleasure. The same may be said of all the appetites. They were doubtless necessary for the purpose of leading to a participation of those aliments, which are needful to support life; but it was not absolutely necessary, that their gratification should afford pleasure. It was necessary that animals should see; but it was not indispensible that the sight should afford a source of enjoyment. It would have been just as easy to connect misery with sight as to link it with happiness We must therefore, regard the enjoyment which flows through this medium, as something that the Creator has superadded to what was strictly necessary. But the limits of a discourse will not allow me to pursue the pleasing subject further. Go, faithless mortal, go, look at the works of God. Go, stand were nature in its beauty lies before you. Go, mark the sportive lamb, that gambols on the green pasture of spring, and note the swift-winged eagle, who proudly soars above the cloud. Behold the sportings of the fish, in the liquid element, and listen to the warbling music of the grove. Go, view these works and ways of God, and then say if thou canst, that there is not goodness in the being from whose hand they came. *Go*, mark well these wonders of creating and preserving love, and tell me if thou art able, that the "earth is *not* full of the goodness of the Lord." I am to show

II. That the lessons of experience gathered from th dealings of God's providences with us, teach the doc trine of the divine goodness.

The experience of man in all ages, and in all clime and conditions of life, bears a strong and explicit testi mony in favour of goodness in that God who control the destinies of individuals and nations. If we tak our own individual experience as a standard, we shal find in it, the abundant manifestations of the divin favour. Who is there among you, that will dare ar raign the goodness of God and say, that his own lif hitherto has been a curse rather than a blessing? am persuaded, that there is no such individual to b found. If I were to pass through this congregation an ask of each and every individual whether he had no experienced much of happiness, and comparativel little of misery? you would with united voices answe in the affirmative. You may have passed throug seasons of suffering, and possibly upon some of you, th storm of affliction may have beat with fury. But th cloud has passed away, and joy has soon, very soo visited you again. I ask you now to take a candid an impartial view of your past lives, and cast up the ac count. On the one side place your seasons of sufferin and misery, and on the other, your days of rejoicin and bliss; and then see how the account will stand

At one time, disease laid its hand upon you, an you languished for a month upon a bed of pain. A another, cruel death came, and took from your fon embrace some dear companion of your pilgrimage o earth, and left you to weep over the sundered ties o friendship. Your tears flowed freely, and you refuse to be comforted, for it was hard to part with that objec of your soul's best affection. At another time, you re

member how misfortune came, and stripped you of your earthly goods, and left you in poverty; perhaps in want. Ah! says one, this is a miserable world, and in it, I have suffered much, and more, much more, I fear, awaits me. Dear man! you have yet looked at but one side of the account. You have been particular to charge your Maker with every privation and sorrow, but have you been equally particular to give him credit for all those joys and blessings, that you have received from his bountiful hand? You have charged to his account that painful disease he sent, but have you remembered to give him credit for those friends, that watched over you in your weakness. Have you remembered that mother, who hung with more than mortal love around your languishing frame—who soothed your feverish brow with her own soft hand, and lent a listening ear to all your cries? Have you forgotten the comforts that were given through the kindness of those friends, who slept not nor slumbered, while there was aught that could relieve your pain, or pluck a thorn from the bed of sickness? Your Father took from you a child or a friend, and you have charged him with the sorrow. But have you given him credit for those joys, that were yours, through a long period, that the loved one was with you? You complain of the depths of your grief, in parting with a companion: but have you forgotten those gleamings of hope, that dawned upon the night of your sorrow, like the beacon's flame upon the troubled waters, whispering that there is a haven above, where you will one day meet in the freshness of immortality and the strength of unfading love? You complain, that your earthly goods were taken away. But pause, I beseech you, and reflect upon the blessings for which you are still his debtor.

Whose earth is that upon which you tread, a
lays her treasures daily and hourly at your fee
you to partake and be happy? Whose su
which pours its splendours upon your noond
and warms and invigorates your active limbs?
showers are these, that fall and water the e
its fruits may grow and fill the garner with
your support? Whose waters are these, t
from the bubbling fountain to quench your thi
whose air is that, which moves your heaving l
thus preserves your life? These all came d
the Father of lights, and the giver of every
every perfect gift: and must these "lie forgott
thankfulness," while all our little woes are
up in memory, and conned by note? The fa
remember our sorrows, but are prone to forget
We can recount every little period of suffe
who can number the hours and days that he
happy? An excellent writer has truly obser
we remember our misery and forget our happi
the same reason, that we recollect a violent st
forget a thousand pleasant days. The one is
the other uncommon.

But we may take a wider range of experie
this. What is true of you, is also true of your
The preponderance in the scale is vastly upon
of happiness. How uncommon a circumstan
midst of multitudes, that pass our streets to
weeping for misery. If you should meet with
instance, when you retire from this house, you
likely to relate the circumstance when you a
your home. If you should pass a hundred, w
all smiling and apparently happy, it would pro
unnoticed or forgotten. But why so? Ah!

cause one is a common, but the other an extraordinary occurrence. Now you may pass over the face of the earth and survey every tribe and nation of human beings. You may visit the palaces of the rich and the cottages of the poor. You may go into the dungeons of the prisoner and the hovels of poverty. You may even descend into the mines, and caves, where degraded humanity, in its lowest estate, finds a shelter from the storm; and when you have done, truth will compel you to say, that for every tear, you have seen a thousand smiles, and for every sigh of misery, ten thousand demonstrations of pleasure. Sorrows no doubt there are, but compared with the amount of joys, they are but the drop of a bucket. I am aware that human life is diversified; but the goodness of God is seen in the fact, that in every form and grade of human society, there is much of happiness. The pale Laplander is happy, when with his reindeer and his sledge, he drives over mountains of eternal snow, and there is no doubt that he enjoys as much in contemplating the fleetness of his deer, as does the prince in view of his gilded coach and more noble steeds. The sable African dances to the music of a reed, under the shade of a spreading palm, and he does it with as light a heart, as his more polished neighbour, "threads the merry dance," in the furnished and illuminated hall. The victor in the sports upon the country green, derives as much real pleasure from his triumph over his compeers, yea, and rejoices with a purer joy, than did Napoleon over the most splendid victory his armies ever won. The same remarks are true in their application to those inequalities, that grow out of knowledge and rank and fortune. These are various, but you will find upon examination, that happiness, the great end and aim of life is more

equally distributed among mankind, than we ar
at first to imagine. I grant you, that the king n
happy, in the contemplation of his dignity and p
but let it not be forgotten, that he does, and he
often sigh for the quietude and joy, that dwells
cot of the humble peasant. I grant, that the ric
be happy in the profusion of earthly goods, that i
tered around them, but I tell you, it not unfreq
happens, that the poor beggar who sits at the gat
craves the crumbs that fall from the rich man's
is the happier of the two. The Christian may
the temple of worship and he may be happy i
templating the glories of the gospel of peace; t
errs, if he allows himself to suppose, for one mo
that the good God of heaven has lavished all his
ties or exhausted his stores of mercy upon him
The unlettered song of praise, which comes up
the good Spirit from the naked child of the
proclaims that the healing waters of peace an
have visited even the lone wigwam of the

> "Poor Indian whose untutored mind
> Sees God in clouds, and hears him in the wind."

He worships the great spirit, and perhaps with as
true devotion, hopes for an humble heaven where

> "No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold;
> And thinks admitted to that equal sky,
> His faithful dog shall bear him company."

With this he is satisfied upon that head. His
ures are mostly physical, and he looks to the cha
his greatest joy. The measure of his intellectu
pacity for enjoyment is small, but God has filled
the very brim.

But you may extend your observations still further. You may remember that the earth has rolled upon its axis for near six thousand years, and during all that time generation rapidly succeeded generation, and the world has been peopled more than twice ten thousand times, and yet in all this multitude of beings there could not be found an individual who has not enjoyed much, even more than he has suffered. For one and for all, the good Father has provided sources of enjoyment and fountains of comfort. Oh! how does the divine goodness shine forth in its glory upon the pages of human experience! You have before you the concentrated experience of six thousand years, and of more human beings than there are sands upon the shore of the sea, and powerfully and emphatically does the whole of it repeat the language of my text—"The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord."

To these views of God's goodness it is sometimes objected, that there is much of suffering and sorrow on earth; that every sweet has its bitter, and every rose a thorn, so that there is little of happiness, that is not mingled with pain. If there is sunshine there are also storms, and nature and experience give but little testimony of unmingled goodness in the God of all. I have already occupied the time usually allotted to a discourse, and cannot therefore dwell upon this objection at present. In my next lecture, which will be upon the moral government of God, I propose to enter somewhat critically into an examination of this matter. I therefore dismiss it for the present, with a remark already made, that the evil of which men complain, is in no nameable case the evident product of design. That is, it is not produced for its own sake, but is the incidental production of means wisely adapted to some good and

benevolent end; and it is in all cases ric
sated in the ultimate good. This conside
is a full answer to every objection agains
goodness, drawn from the existence of real
ill. But of this matter you shall hear mor
time.

I have endeavoured to prove that God is
appeal to nature and experience. This is
fundamental articles of the Christian faith
adduced any evidence of its truth, place it
of Christianity. If I have proved it true,
also proved that another of the foundation
temple of Christ is laid where it cannot b
present you with the simple fact that God
tained by nature and experience. I point
Bible, which declares that he is good, and
to ask your assent to so much of its teachi
stantial truth. You may call the Bible wl
but so long as there is a sun in the firm
ungrateful child of Adam who feeds upon G
on the face of the earth, so long will this t
The ruthless hand of infidelity would no
the Bible from existence, but there is one t
not do. It cannot quench the fires of the s
those everlasting lines which God has writ
face of nature. There the truth shines i
and there mortals may read what they wil
the Bible—"THE EARTH IS FULL OF THE
THE LORD." "Praise him! ye heavens, a
that are above the heavens! Oh! speak
name, for he *is* good, and his mercy endure

DISCOURSE VI.

GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad. PSALMS xcvii. 1.

In my last discourse I gave you to understand that the labour of this evening would be devoted to the doctrine of God's universal government. I have passed in review some of the evidences of the existence, power, wisdom and goodness of God. My object has been to prove, that there is a God possessed of these attributes; and I now advance one step further, and undertake to show, that this God reigns supreme over all the earth. He reigns not only in the material universe, but over the world of mind, and has established a moral government in the earth, which is administered upon those principles of goodness and wisdom and justice, that may well call forth joy and rejoicing from those who are its subjects. These positions are embraced in the text, and they are most explicitly taught throughout the Bible. My object is to show that this doctrine of Scripture has its foundation in truth.

That God reigns in the physical universe, is a position which I do not recollect to have seen or heard disputed by any one who admits his existence. It would be the highest degree of absurdity, to suppose that an intelligent God would employ his power and wisdom in creating a universe, and after he had made it, leave

it without his care or any laws for its government. An here let me observe, that the idea of God's governmen in the material universe does not necessarily suppos that he interposes with a special agency or providenc in every phenomena of nature. When I say that Go reigns in the material universe, I mean that when h created the world, he gave it laws by which it shoul be governed; these laws are in force; all nature i subjected to them; and no power or circumstance ca wrest one particle of matter from their control. The are laws that came from the great Creator. It is hi constant agency that keeps them continually in force and the vast universe acknowledges their supremacy In this manner God reigns. That such laws do in fac exist, and that the sun and moon and stars bow wit meek submission to their authority, and that even th small dust of the balance is under their control, no rea sonable man ever yet denied. The subject of the or gin of these laws, whether they exist in matter an have existed there from all eternity, independent of Creator, I have already considered. I need not retrac my steps to go over that ground again. Besides, it i not with the atheist I have now to do, but with th deist who admits the existence of a God. With th atheist I have nearly done, for when a man's head ge so completely turned that he will deny the God th made him, he is "wise in his own conceit," and I a of Solomon's opinion, that "there is more hope of fool than that man." There are laws in existence l which the material universe is governed, and I think have shown that in this case as in all others whe there are laws, there is a legislator, and *this* legislat is God. I will not therefore spend more time in pro ing that the material universe is subject to certain lav

given it by the Creator, and hence, that God reigns among these worlds and systems of worlds, which people the immensity of space around us. I set it down as a truth which cannot be controverted, that physical nature is under the control and government of its God and yields obedience to the laws he gave it at first.

But whether God reigns also in the mental and moral universe, or has established a moral government in the world, is a question upon which men take more liberty to doubt. There are those who admit that God rules the planets in their course, that he governs the earth in all her movements, and yet they feel disposed to deny that he exercises any government over the moral intelligences whom he has created and placed upon its surface. But why should one of these be doubted more than the other? Why should the same God who created the material universe and gave nature her laws, and who is careful to preserve order and harmony in all the works of his hands—why should this same God leave the world of intelligent and moral beings to run at random? Why should it be thought that a being whom all nature declares to be a God of order, has left the moral universe a scene of wild uproar and confusion with no laws for its government. I confess that the very fact of God's government in the world of matter is with me strong presumptive evidence, that he also reigns over the intelligent moral beings of his creation. Reasoning from the evidences of God's government in the material universe, the presumption, *a priori*, is, that he reigns in the universe of mind as he does in matter. That excellent philosopher Dugald Stewart, has a passage so pertinent to this subject, that I beg leave to introduce it to your attention. He says, "The numberless references and dependancies between

the material and moral worlds exhibited within the narrow sphere of our observation on this globe, encourage and even *authorize* us to conclude that they both form parts of one and the same plan—a conclusion congenial with the best and noblest principles of human nature, and which all the discoveries of genuine science unite in confirming. * * The presumption unquestionably is, that there is one great *moral system* corresponding to the material system, and that the connexions which we at present trace so distinctly among the sensible objects composing the one, are exhibited as so many intimations of some vast scheme comprehending all the intelligent beings composing the other." (See Stewart's works, part 2, chap. 2, sec. 4.) But we need not rest the argument upon any process of reasoning, *a priori*, however sound or logical. There are *facts* which have a direct bearing upon this subject. It is a fact that there are clearly defined and settled principles of mind, by which it is governed in all nations, and has been governed in all ages. There is no law of matter more clearly exhibited than are many of these laws of the human mind. It is also true that man is possessed of a moral nature susceptible of moral impressions, and that there are also laws by which this moral nature is governed. There lives not a man who has not some sort of moral sense, and however degraded he may be, he yields to the control of this sense in his conduct. These general facts are of themselves fully sufficient to establish the point, that there is a moral governor who controls the acts of men, and whose laws are known and obeyed in the empire of mind. I ought perhaps to be more explicit here. I aver then, that there is no intelligent rational being in existence, who has not some moral sense. Every man

has some ideas of right and wrong. When he does that which he deems right, his moral sense approves what he has done; but when the reverse of this is the fact, this same moral sense chastens him. This is a law of man's moral nature, and he feels the power of that law in all his acts of life. Now I maintain that the very existence of such a law is proof that there is a lawgiver, a moral governor, whose laws are extended over the moral universe, and hence the position is sustained by facts, that God has established his government in the earth.

I apprehend however, that the chief objection to the government of God, originates in the fact that there is much of apparent confusion in the moral world. We look at the material universe and we see the most plain and positive evidences that there are laws by which it is governed. The sun rises and sets, the earth pursues its course, the seasons change, and the planets move on in undisturbed harmony in their accustomed orbits. In every department of the material universe there is order and harmony. But the objector contends that in the moral world things wear a different aspect. Here all is apparent confusion. This man believes and practises one thing, and that another. In one place it is lawful to rob, steal, plunder and murder, and in another these things are punished as an offence against the laws of God and man. Now, continues the objector, I cannot believe that all these things are under the direction of a great moral governor, for if they were there would be more of order and less of confusion.

To this argument, however specious it may appear, it may be justly replied, that it is to all intents and purposes, a begging of the question. The whole force of the argument centres in the position that the moral

universe is a scene of chaotic confusion, without la
for its government, which is the very thing to be prov
and I have no idea of allowing an antagonist to assu
the whole ground in debate in order to obtain a foot
whereon to stand. Because the moral world is wi
out government and in a state of confusion, theref
it is without government, and consequently withou
governor. Is this the argument? I know that th
is an attempt at proof, of the position that confus
reigns in the moral world. But I must be allowed
question the validity of the proof. We are told ind
that men think differently, and that what is right in
place is wrong in another; but I have yet to learn
every thing must necessarily be set down as misr
and disorder, which man fails to arrange according
his notions of order and harmony. The allusion to
apparent order of physical nature appears ill-jud
and unfortunate in this case. I have never yet b
satisfied, that there is more disorder and confusion
the moral than in the physical universe; and I
thoroughly convinced that the only reason why n
judge to the contrary is, that they are not so well
quainted with the one as they are with the other. T
philosophy of matter has outstripped the philosophy
mind. Man has been able to take a somewhat c
prehensive view of the great field of outward nat
and to trace out the laws by which its operations
governed. Thus in many, very many instances, he
been able to discover harmony where confusion al
was supposed to exist. If you go back to the days
preceded the bright career of a Newton, you will f
that there was as much darkness in relation to the
nomena of nature around us, as there now is, or
was, in reference to the phenomena of the moral wo

Philosophers were as much bewildered in their search for the laws of nature, and they thought they saw as much turmoil and confusion in the material works of God, as the most obstinate opposer of God's moral government now professes to see in the moral aspect of the universe. But since that time, philosophy has taught us that nature has her laws, which came from nature's God, and must be obeyed. We have learned that results apparently contradictory, are the effects of the same law. We now see the self-same law at work in the rising vapour as in the fall of a stone. We have learned that the same law which forms a drop of water and causes it to fall to the earth, also gives to the earth its consistency, and guides its course through the trackless immensity of space. Thus, much of the confusion and darkness that for ages reigned over the phenomena of creation has been removed. I know not that any man of science now doubts that every remaining appearance of confusion in these works is owing to the ignorance of man, and not to any defect in their laws. There are yet remaining things that philosophy never has explained; but reasoning from the known to the unknown, the judicious philosopher concludes, that these also are the regular and orderly results of laws that have hitherto eluded his utmost vigilance; and all remaining appearances of irregularity, to the contrary notwithstanding, he confesses the footsteps of a God in all the works, and his government in all the operations of nature. I have said that there are remaining appearances of irregularity and confusion in the material universe. There are many of these. Go and watch the blazing meteor as with incredible velocity it shoots across the heavens, or falls to the earth. Mark the magnetic needle which guides the mariner across the

mighty waters, and gaze upon those northern lights seem to threaten earth wiih conflagration, and asl the laws of nature that produce these wonders? losophy is mute, and confesses that here theory ı be substituted for fact and hypothesis for truth. and mark the rushing whirl of the tempest, when noise and din of contending elements, the comming crash of the whirlwind and the thunder and storm st the stout heart with terror, and threaten destructio the fairest portions of earth. Do you see any thing order and harmony there? Nay, it is to us, "co sion worse confounded." But who now points to tl as evidence that the world of matter is a scene of ı tumult and confusion, without law or governme No man with even a smattering of philosophy pur such a course. The judicious mind reasons thus is true, I see nothing in the riotous uproar of the st that looks like order and harmony. But from wh know of nature, I am satisfied that all this is but result of well-established laws, and though I cannc this instance trace their precise operation, yet I h not the remotest idea that there is one lawless part of matter in that driving tempest. I see the "*aur borealis*," and many other things which to me are explicable; but reasoning from the known to the known, I must conclude that these also are the regı and orderly effects of laws, which though they h eluded the vigilance of my feeble powers, are not less certain or sure. I have seen the darkness ı brooded over many of the phenomena of nature, var before the light of truth, and the footsteps of a rul and governing God revealed, where chaos and cor sion had for ages been supposed to reign, and it is r presumption in me to pronounce aught that rema

unexplained, an evidence of anarchy in the works of God. This is the mode of reasoning adopted in reference to the material universe. Why will not men reason thus in regard to the moral world? It is a mode of argument that accords with the soundest principles of philosophical investigation, and though its adoption in this case might have an unfavourable influence upon some sceptical theories, yet I am persuaded that truth would be advanced by its decisions. At all events, a just comparison of what yet remains unexplained in the material and moral worlds, should teach us to be modest in asserting that one is orderly and the other filled with confusion.

From the considerations above named, you will perceive that it is not altogether certain that what we call confusion, is in fact a war of discordant elements without law; and hence the objection to the divine government, founded upon these apparent irregularities in the moral world, rests upon an unsubstantial basis. Every discovery of science, and every just principle of philosophical investigation, whether drawn from physical nature or the philosophy of mind, urges upon us the conclusion, that there are moral as well as physical laws, and that all of apparent confusion results from the operation of these laws in a manner which man's blindness has not hitherto allowed him to detect. I need not here repeat the remark, that if man's mental and moral constitution has its laws, then there must be a lawgiver and governor. Nor will any one presume to object that this is resting the proof of God's moral government upon a mere probable conjecture at best, for it is the same kind of proof with which the most sceptical philosopher is satisfied, when it is applied to the physical universe. No man can trace out the laws

of matter which produce the "northern lights," nor can any man see aught of regularity in a tempest, and yet no man doubts the fact of their being the result of well-established laws, nor does any man think of pointing to these unexplained phenomena of nature as triumphant proof that it is without law or government. So, no reasonable man ought to regard like circumstances in the moral world as evidence that its vast domain is without a governor. I might even push the argument further, and from the fact that the minutest particle of matter is as much subject to the laws of nature, as the earth itself, by the strictest parity of reasoning, it would appear that the smallest item in the moral universe is as strictly subjected to the moral laws of God, as those mighty movements of mind, that shake thrones and empires. But I pass this. The whole subject is embraced in this. There are certain fixed laws of mind, and clearly-defined principles of man's moral nature, the existence of which no man dare dispute; but some feel disposed to dispute the existence of a lawgiver and governor, because they have not been able to trace the operation of these laws in certain phenomena of the moral world. I have shown that this is a process of reasoning which these very men have repudiated, and which has been long since exploded by all philosophers. I only ask you to reason upon the same principles in regard to God's moral government, that you adopt in your investigations of physical nature, and you will come to the conclusion in the *one* that you have long since drawn in the other, that

> "All nature is but art unknown to thee,
> All chance, direction which thou canst not see,
> All discord, harmony, not understood,
> All partial evil, universal good."

There is another view of the divine government which is worthy of a passing notice. There are those who are willing to allow, that God controls those mighty events that occur among nations: but when we come to the Scripture doctrine, that he takes cognizance of every secret thought, and that even the hairs of our heads are all numbered, they hesitate and doubt. But one of these doctrines is just as true as the other, and every argument that can be adduced in favour of one will bear with equal force in favour of the other. In fact, one cannot be true without the other. A nation is but a collection of individuals, and hence it is manifestly impossible that any being can rule a nation, without controlling at the same time the individuals of which that nation is composed. It would indeed be a curious idea for any man to advance, that God rules and governs the solar system, and yet he has no particular concern with the planets. A child can see that it is those planets which compose the system, and hence, that it is utterly impossible for God to rule the system without controling the individual planets of which it is composed. So in this case: if it be allowed that God reigns among the nations, it must also be allowed that he controls the individuals which compose the nations. When it is reflected that the fate of nations has been decided by the sting of an insect or the noise of a fowl, it will appear as necessary that God should control the beggar as the king. In fact, the same arguments that will prove the one will prove the other also. No man can advance an argument to prove that God ruled the mighty movements of a Napoleon, which shook all Europe to its centre, which will not also as clearly prove that he ruled the softest step of the humblest soldier in his camp. But I pass on to a yet more

important view of the doctrine of the divine government.

I said I would attempt to show that the fact of God's universal government affords a matter of joy and rejoicing to those who are its subjects.

Let any man reflect upon the condition of the world without mental or moral laws and he will soon be satisfied that there is propriety in the language of our text, which calls on the earth and the islands of the sea to rejoice because the Lord reigneth. Suppose God had left the human mind without any fixed laws for its government. What a scene of uncertainty, uproar, confusion and misery, would this world exhibit? The very foundations of all society would be broken up in a moment. How could a man calculate upon the faithfulness of friends, or the love of kindred? How could a man decide on any course to promote even his own happiness? The very thing which made him happy yesterday might make him miserable to-day; and he could not have the least possible reason for believing that the friends who have loved him hitherto would continue their love. It is our knowledge of the established laws of the human mind, and that alone, which enables us to shape our course through the journey of life with any tolerable hope of securing the prize of happiness. Go to a lunatic asylum, to a very bedlam, where maniacs are congregated, and where the ravings and incoherent mutterings of distraction greet your senses. Why are these not as other men? The answer is, that there the known laws of mind are perverted. There its elements are at war, and its healthful laws disturbed in their operation. And there, in that Babel of misery, you may see a picture of what the earth would be without those laws of mind that came

from the Creator. Suppose again, that man was made without a moral nature, or if you please, that he has no moral sense. You see that all moral character of actions is destroyed at once. Man would as soon do one thing as another. All the enjoyments flowing from conscious virtue are gone, and one would as soon destroy his friend as his enemy. Every barrier against rapine, bloodshed and murder, and the full license of unbridled lust, is broken down, and earth would be but a scene of wretchedness. Look at the subject in this light, and you will not fail to discover that it is indeed matter of joy that God has given to man a moral law which guards the temple of virtue, and raises a barrier against the floods of iniquity. And here let me remark, that the moral laws of the Bible have an existence more enduring than ink and paper, or even tables of stone can give them. They are but a transcript, or if you please, a revelation of those immutable laws which the finger of God has written upon man's moral nature. They point to one path and command us to walk therein. Why? Because God has so made our moral constitutions, that there, and there only, we can be happy. They point to another path and forbid us to enter thereon. Why? Because in so doing we shall do violence to the laws of our moral nature, and misery will be the consequence. Here then you see there is reason to rejoice in the knowledge of God's government.

But I must pass to another view of the subject. I am not insensible of the fact, that I have here to encounter one of the most formidable objections ever urged against the government of God. I allude to the EXISTENCE OF EVIL. I have endeavoured to prove that God reigns alike in the material and moral worlds, and that those appearances of irregularity and confusion

which are discovered in one and the other, can be more properly placed to the account of man's ignorance, than any defect in the works of God. I have also remarked, that the government of God is characterized with goodness, which should make it a source of joy and rejoicing. Against these positions it is urged, that there is much evil in the world, both physical and moral. Earthquakes swallow up cities, famines and pestilences sweep away their thousands and tens of thousands, sickness preys upon our bodies, and remorse and sorrow upon our souls. Wars and fightings abound, crime and rebellion are frequent, pride, revenge and cruelty, walk unmasked in the light of noonday, and poverty and affliction with a train of ills are the constant companions of thousands. I cannot believe says one, that a good God would allow so many evils. If there was an infinitely good and powerful being at the head of government to control all things, he would not permit so much misery. I therefore conclude that there is no such God, or if there is, that he has no concern in the government of the world.

It is much easier to find fault with the plans of another, than to frame a better plan of ourselves. It is an easy thing to complain of evils, but to devise means for their correction is another and more difficult task. I wish to treat this subject with all possible fairness and candour. I trust I am not so blinded with prejudice, nor so enslaved with bigotry, that I cannot see or will not confess the force of an objection. I grant you with all readiness of mind, that there is much plausibility, and not a little apparent force in this reasoning against the divine government. I admit, and candour compels me to admit, that the existence of the numerous ills of life, affords the strongest objection,

that has ever been presented to my mind against the idea, that a wise and good God controls and governs all things. But that even this furnishes a sound and valid argument sufficient to set aside the many positive testimonies of God's universal dominion, I am not prepared to grant. I know of no system of philosophy or religion to which objections may not be urged. The part of wisdom is to weigh evidence in a balance and choose that which is best sustained. In this case, there are but two possibles. Either there is a God who governs all things or there is not. I concede, that the existence of evil is an objection to the doctrine of his being and government, but I warn you not to make up a decision upon exparte evidence alone. I desire you to hear both sides of the question, and then candidly weigh the probabilities of the case. I think I have sufficiently shown, that there is a vast preponderance of order over confusion, and of good over evil, not only in the material, but also in the moral universe. I grant you, if you please, that every evidence of disorder and confusion is an objection to government and laws being in force, but I desire you also to concede, that every appearance of order and regularity, is also an evidence in favour of government and law. There are storms and earthquakes and famine and pestilences! True, but there is also sunshine, and solid earth, and plenty and health, and the preponderance is vastly in favour of the latter. If one is an evidence of anarchy, the other is an evidence of government, and there are at least *ten* arguments of the same nature, in favour of the one, where there is *one* in favour of the other. If you lay the objection against the goodness of the divine governor, the same result will follow. That there is a vast preponderance of good over evil, of happiness over misery,

I have before shown, and hence the weight of evidence must always be in favour of goodness in the being who reigns over all. Happiness is the rule, misery is only the exception, and it were as unphilosophical as it is illogical to allow an objection drawn from the *exception*, to set aside the positive proof contained in the *rule*. You will see then that my concession of your objection, can make but one point in disproving the divine government, while I am at least ten in advance, in the positive proof of that doctrine.

Thus much I have said upon the supposition that the objection is valid and unanswerable, for I wished to give it its full force. But I now remark, that there are circumstances to be taken into the account, which are calculated to abate much from the force and cogency of the argument. It is not altogether certain, that what we call irregularity and confusion and evil, is so in reality. We ought never to forget, that the sphere of our vision is exceedingly limited, and, that we must comprehend the whole plan of the universe before we can positively pronounce this or that to be an evil. The fly, who can see no more than an inch, is a very unsuitable judge of architecture, and we should pronounce it rash presumption in that insect when crawling upon a temple, to "tax the structure of the whole," or deny the wisdom and goodness of the builder, because there were some things, that did not exactly meet his views of order, in the purview of his feeble vision. Thus presumptious is that man, who sees but a small section of creation, and taxes the wisdom or goodness of God, because he sees something, that to him, wears the form of evil. For aught you know, or can know that apparent evil of which you complain, is just as necessary in the great plan, and designed for as

d good ends as any thing that you call good. t say I can positively prove this to be the fact, is it necessary that I should, for I rest not the f the divine government and goodness upon oubtful circumstances. It belongs to the man leges these as objections to the divine govern- prove that they are what he calls them, and is whole argument supposes them to be, *real*, evils. Until this is done, there is so much, that abated from the force of the objection. I said not positively prove, that these apparent evils essary and good in point of fact; but I am bound that all the discoveries of true philosophy r natural or moral tend to confirm this principle. material universe there are many things, which s were thought to be mere chaos or anarchy, are now seen to be the result of good and whole- ws, and it is not now counted credulity in the philosopher to believe, that all remaining ap- es of confusion, even the changes of the weather violence of the storm, are governed by well- hed laws, whose operations he does not see in nstances. There is every reason for carrying e process of reasoning over to every thing that l evil. The pains and disappointments and of life, may all be justly placed upon the same , and reasonably disposed of in the same way. e are many things in life from which men recoil s, which have nevertheless been shown to be The pains of hunger are grievous to be borne; ich enjoyment flows from that very appetite the pain proceeds. No man would wish to be t an appetite for food that he might be safe from ins of hunger; and the man who has suffered

from hunger, eats with a relish, which causes hi
rejoice, that he experienced that sensation. Man
our highest enjoyments proceed from a contrast
ills, and many of the ills themselves originate
sweetest pleasures. Plenty is doubly sweet to
man who has suffered want, and health is more pre
to those who have been deprived of it. Pity, con
sion and benevolence, are drawn out by the fact,
there are sufferings, and most of the finer feelin
the human heart, from which our highest and h
joys proceed are called into exercise by the ills o
As for our sorrows and afflictions, it does not a
how far they are calculated to develope and streng
our faculties, improve our minds, and train us for h
and nobler enjoyments. That the temper and d
sition of the mind is improved and exalted, under
chastening influence, and enjoyment consequent
creased, no man can dispute. Reasoning the
from the known to the unknown, we may do a
philosopher has in physical nature, and conclude
all that is dark and mysterious in our own liv
truly well ordered, and conducive to ultimate goo
is said of the celebrated philosopher Spurzheim,
when about to select a wife, he chose a lady wh
seen great affliction. With him it was a fixed prin
that great mental suffering was necessary for th
velopment of the highest and purest qualities o
soul. Upon this theory I remark in the langua
another: "It is hard to heave the sigh, to shed the
night tear, to feel sorrow pressing heavily on the
heart, and such sorrow too as we dare not suffe
one but God to look upon—it is hard and bitte
under its chastening influence, it is not for us t
how much the heart beautifies, and the will acc

the principles of obedience. How many deathless works of genius have been forced into being by the iron hand of poverty. Debts, embarrassment and want have been the uncongenial yet creative elements of poetry and romance." Does any one ask if an all-wise God could not have made man, so that these ends could have been attained by other means? I answer, yes, but he must have been a very different being from what he is now. There is no doubt that he could have made man an angel. But this is not the question. We are not inquiring whether God could not have made a different order of beings: but we are to take man as we find him, and see if there is not goodness in his Creator and governor. To this object my remarks have been directed, and it remains for you to decide whether the many positive evidences in favour of the divine government and goodness, are to yield to the single objection, that there is in existence what we deem evil. For me I say

> "I cannot go
> Where universal Love smiles not around,
> Sustaining all yon orbs and all their suns,
> From seeming evil, still educing good;
> And better thence again, and better still
> In infinite progression."

If I have adduced any evidence of the divine government, place it to the credit of that Bible which declares that "the Lord reigneth." I remark in conclusion, that even the Bible does not profess to explain all the mysteries of the divine government. It points to the heavens, the works of his finger, and records many striking instances of the development of the principles of his government, but in many things it bows in silence and confesses that his ways are hid in the great

deep, and that clouds and darkness are round abo him. But to all the clearest displays of his overruli power, the language of Job is appropriate: "Lo, the are parts of his ways, but how little a portion is se of him."

DISCOURSE VII.

REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS.

nold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth; much more icked and the sinner. Proverbs xi. 31.

:y last discourse was devoted to a consideration of loctrine of the divine government. Intimately con- ed with this is the doctrine of rewards and punish- ts. I have laboured to prove that God has estab- :d a moral government in the earth, and I now eed with an attempt to show that this government ministered upon the principles of justice and equity. rewards the virtuous and punishes the vicious, ac- ing to the dictates of impartial justice. This is loctrine of the text, and it perfectly corresponds the uniform testimony of both the Old and the Testament. I shall be satisfied if I am able to e that this doctrine of the Bible is sanctioned by exhibited in the experience of man. I have re- :ed, that God has given to man a moral constitu- which has its laws, and by which his moral conduct gulated. I have further said that the moral laws e Bible have an existence more enduring than ink paper, or even tables of stone can impart. They vritten by the finger of God upon man's moral e, and form a part of his very constitution. I will in still further. The whole moral code of the is comprehended in the two commands, which

enjoin it upon us to love God and our neighbo
man's moral constitution is such, the world
he cannot arrive at the highest point of
without obedience to this law. He is so
when he obeys this law, he is happy, and
infringe one hair's breadth upon its requirem
out doing an act of violence to his own mo
You will perceive then, that this law has its
in the very nature of man, and is not a mer
command, originating in the whim or capri
lawgiver. Thus the Scripture is fulfilled wh
"I will put my law in their inward parts, an
in their hearts." The Bible might be des
tirely, and yet, that law would remain. It
be true, eternally and universally true, that
appropriate element of the mind, and the only
employment of man's moral powers is loving
man, and in acts proceeding from that love.
the native element of the soul, and this its a
and only sphere of healthful moral action.
employments degrade and debase the mind,
and here alone, the full strength and glory of
man is developed. To use another figure;
aliment upon which the moral nature of man
grows to its full stature, and as for hatred
unholy passion and practice, their effect is li
poison upon the body, destroying its powers
uating its fatal influence through all the ch
healthful existence. If these things are so,
not aware that infidelity itself has ever den
then the doctrine of rewards and punishmen
logically argued "a priori," from the very
man. There are certain laws of man's corp
tem which must be obeyed, or we suffer t

quences. When obeyed, the reward is certain, and not one of them can be transgressed with impunity. The health of the body requires that a man should eat. This is a law of his nature, and if he transgresses it, he will suffer the consequences. So also, another law of nature requires moderation and temperance in eating and drinking, and when a man in obedience to this law is temperate in all things, he is richly rewarded in the firmness and health of body that he enjoys. But when any man infringes upon this law of his physical constitution, nature will chasten him for his disobedience. From these considerations the presumption is unquestionable, that the same is true of our moral natures. If God has given to man's moral nature any laws, then there can be no doubt but their violation will as certainly entail its own bitter consequences, as the violation of a law of our corporeal system will have this effect. In like manner, an obedience to these laws will secure its own reward. Upon these principles, therefore, we contend that the doctrine of rewards and punishments is placed on strong ground, and this is the scriptural view of the subject. I know the world has long been of the opinion that God cannot punish a man unless he takes a rod and scourges him as you would correct a refractory child, and it is for this reason that men have been looking both for rewards and punishments in something foreign to, or over and above their virtues and vices. But it is not necessary for God to pursue such a course. What he does once is done for ever. He gave laws to man's moral nature in the first place, and bound obedience and happiness, disobedience and misery together, by a tie that eternity cannot dissolve. In this manner rewards and punishments were provided for of old, and treasured up for the

virtuous and the vicious in all coming time, and they follow with a certainty that cannot be eluded.* Thus the Scriptures speak, "His judgments are just, and in keeping them there is great reward, but there *is* no peace to the wicked." Thus you may see that reason and the Scriptures harmonize in teaching the doctrine of rewards and punishments.

But I rest not the defence of this doctrine upon any process of reasoning alone, however logical or conclusive it may be; for there are *facts* that may be heard upon this subject, and to these I appeal for the proof of the text, "Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth; much more the wicked and the sinner." If you examine your own individual experience you will find it recorded there, in language too plain to be misunderstood, that the nearer you have come in your feelings and practice to the great law of love, the greater have been your enjoyments on the one hand; and on the other, you have suffered for each and every departure from that law. I ask you, when were you the happiest? And I answer for you; it was when you felt most of the spirit of love to God and man, and when your powers were employed in acts of kindness to your fellow creatures. These are the green spots upon the desert of life around which fond memory lingers with delight, and calls forth the wish that all else was like this. I ask again, when were you most miserable? And again I answer for you, it was when consuming fires of hatred, with revenge, or cruelty, were waked up in your bosom, and your hands were employed in injuring your brethren. Now this principle was just as true in your childhood, before you could read your Bible, as it is now. When you were angry

* See note H.

you were miserable even in childhood, but when you felt the warm spirit of love for parents or brethren, or companions, at work in your heart, then you were happy. This was not the effect of a revelation of God's law, but it was the effect of the original law itself, stamped upon the nature of the soul, by the forming hand of the Creator. But the law does not end here. The positive enjoyment or suffering which we experience at the time, we harbour love or hate, is not all that should be taken into the account. Conscience erects in the mind of those to whom the law is revealed, her tribunal, and memory opens fountains of joy, or brings up visions of grief from the oblivion of the past. I ask, which of you has ever loved a brother or done him a kindness, the recollection of which does not to this moment cause sensations of the purest joy to steal over the soul? Not one. Who among you can say, that he has ever hated a brother or done him an injury, the remembrance of which does not give him a pang of regret? You may carry this principle back to the earliest dawn of your existence, and till you come where the oblivious tide of utter forgetfulness conceals every trace of the past, you will find no exceptions. I know not indeed how others may feel, but "as face answereth to face in a glass, so the heart of man to man," and judging from my own experience and the operations of my own mind, I conclude that it is even so with you all. I look back to the days of my early childhood and youth, I remember how I was angry with a brother, or sought revenge of my companions, and, God forgive me, I wish it were otherwise. These are the only clouds that obscure the brightness of my youthful morning, and I would to heaven that they were moved away. In like manner, I remember my affection and love for my brethren and

companions, and the little offices of kindness I hav done them; the recollection is a cordial to my spirit and most devoutly do I wish, that this heart had nev harboured an angry feeling or these hands performe an evil act. These are developments of the laws c man's moral nature, obedience to which is joy, ar every infraction of which, is sure to meet with a ju recompense of reward. They are as clearly manifest as any laws of our physical constitution, and their o erations as sure and certain.

I might take a much wider field of observation, ar should arrive at the same conclusion at last. If y were to search for a happy man, where would you gc Would you go to the haunts of vice, and select amo its votaries the man in whose bosom the fires of hatre and wrath, and revenge, and cruelty, are wasting ar consuming? Nay; for in him you would expect to fi a man emphatically poor, and miserable, and blind, ar naked. But go to the good man, whose heart is war with the pure spirit of benevolence and love, and who hands are engaged in works of kindness, and there y will find happiness in its greatest earthly perfectic Do you wish for proof of this? Go then and exami the ways of the transgressor, and if you do not find t clearest evidence that his is indeed a "hard way," th must you be blind to every appearance of evil, and i sensible to the absence of all good.

Take the liar, who in the spirit of hatred or reveng uttered his malicious forgeries to blast the reputati of a fellow. Mark him when retired from the wor and its noise and bustle; he sits down in the momer of cool contemplation, and reflects upon himself a his ways. Busy memory is at work, and he feels t gnawings of the restless worm. He feels how vile

is, and the pains of hell get hold upon him. Take the thief, who has laid his hands unlawfully upon his neighbour's goods. Behold him arraigned at the bar of justice, and led to the prison, and you can here see, that the way of the transgressor is hard. Or if he escapes the retribution of the laws of his country, he cannot escape the consuming fires that his crime has kindled in his own bosom. He starts at the rustling leaf, and fears that the officer of justice is upon him. The remembrance of his crime keeps him in perpetual alarm. Take the murderer whose ruthless hands have been imbrued in the blood of a brother. In ordinary cases he is detected and suffers the penalty of the laws of his country. This, however, he sometimes may escape. But there is a faithful monitor within, whose vigilance he cannot elude, and a tribunal there, before which he must stand, and hear his condemnation. He may lock his crime in the deep recesses of his own soul, where the eye of man cannot penetrate; he may flee from the sword of human justice; but he must carry along with him the damning consciousness of his own guilt. Go where he will, cruel memory will haunt him with the image of his murdered brother, and the voice of blood crying from the ground for vengeance, will sound in his ears, the requium of departed joy. He may fly to the ends of the earth; that voice will still pursue him. He may dig to its very centre and bury his crime there, but conscience will sound the trump of its resurrection, and from the silence and darkness of the grave it will come up, in its freshness to disturb his midnight slumbers—to scare him with dreams and terrify him through visions. Are these the men that you would select as the happy men of the world? Certainly not; for every rule of judgment by which we can decide upon the en-

joyment of our fellow-creatures, will declare that they are of all men most miserable. I grant that these are strong cases, in which the operation of the violated law in bringing the offender to justice, is conspicuously exhibited. But I maintain, that though the punishment of crime in these instances is more easily apprehended than in many others, yet it is no more certain. The tendency of every departure from the perfect law of love is evil, and the man in whom such a departure, even though small, is found, does an act of violence to the laws of his moral nature, and can no more escape the consequences, than the drunkard can escape the evil influence of intemperance. If he indulges in intemperance, he violates the laws of his corporeal system, and is undermining the foundation of health and life, however slowly, yet certainly. So, the man who in any manner departs from the law of love, violates the laws of his moral system, and the legitimate and unavoidable consequences are, a loss of that healthful tone of the system, which is necessary to the enjoyment of the full measure of happiness. In this manner you can see that God provides for the sure and speedy punishment of vice, and the reward of every virtue.

To this view of rewards and punishments there are some objections which are worthy of notice.

1. From long continuance in sin, men's consciences become callous, and they exhibit a deadness of moral feeling so great, that they cease to shudder at any crime.

I will endeavour to present the objection in all its force for I know it is with many a very serious one. It is admitted that there is a degree of punishment resulting from the operation of moral laws of the mind; but it is contended that this punishment is by no means graduated by the measure of guilt. One man com-

mences a career of crime, and follows it until he appears wholy lost to all moral sensibility. In the outset of this career, conscience did its work, and chastened him for an offence comparatively small. But now he has foresworn conscience; he is a hardened pirate, and he can rob and butcher his fellows by scores, and discover not the least possible compunction. Now says the objector, this man though more vile than Cain, and stained with a thousand crimes of a crimson die, suffers not half so much from that reproving conscience of which you speak, as the man of refined moral sense, who steps aside from the path of rectitude in a single instance. He is a thousand times more guilty, and yet he appears to suffer less. This reasoning I confess is somewhat plausible, but of its soundness I have serious doubts. I am not altogether certain that this morbid insensibility of the moral powers is a state very favourable to happiness. I think that the purest joys of life flow from refined moral sense, and the healthful exercise of the moral powers, in loving God and our fellows; and hence, I conclude, that to enervate or destroy these powers, is of itself a bitter curse. The very state of mind which can permit a man to riot in crime, is itself hell, in the worst sense, and yet it is to this very state of mind, that the argument under consideration appeals as an evidence of exemption from misery. It is precisely like contending, that a deaf man is better off, that those who have the sense of hearing, because, he can now stand by the cannon, and its roar will not give him pain. But who would deprive himself of the sense of hearing for the purpose of enabling him to endure without pain, what to others is deafening? Take another illustration. Here is an article of poison. To the man of common taste it is

nauseating. He tastes, and it is loathsome. Another commences taking that poison, and he soon acquires a morbid taste which even craves it, and he daily takes without apparent injury, what might prove fatal to another. Is this ability to swallow poison with avidity, to be placed to that man's credit on the side of enjoyment? No. The truth is, though his taste is vitiated, yet, the article is not less poisonous, and doing the work of death in his system; and the very fact, that he has an appetite for the poison, is in itself a curse to be dreaded. Here is a man who gets intoxicated for the first time in his life. I have no doubt that for the time being he suffers more, both mentally and physically, than the man who has been in the habit of committing this sin. But is it a fact, that the one suffers much and the other little? Is it true that the habitual and sottish drunkard is happier than the moderately intemperate man? or will the man who for once indulges his appetite too freely, repine under the consequent suffering and envy the condition of the miserable sot, who riots in the lowest depths of moral degradation? Absurd and even ridiculous as this would be it is nevertheless precisely the principle upon which the argument now under consideration is based. I beg leave to remark, that because a man has steeped his senses, and saturated his body with alcohol, until he has neither feeling nor shame left, it does not follow that he is exempt from the legitimate effects of drunkenness. On the contrary, the fact that his senses are thus stupified, is the most alarming circumstance in the case, and affords the clearest proof, that the work of death is going on with fearful rapidity. So in this instance, because a man has so far debased and stupified his moral sensibility, that he can drink copious draughts of iniquity

without compunction, it does not follow that he is more happy or less miserable than the man of refined moral sense. On the contrary, the very fact, that iniquity will make such havoc of the moral powers, is proof positive, that it is a mortal poison, and that it is at work mingling its dregs of death in all sources of bliss, and drying up all the fountains of happiness. Tell me not, that the hardened wretch who has well nigh obliterated the image of God from his moral nature, and who has drowned his moral sensibilities in the waters of sin, is happy; for he himself will tell you, that he is a poor miserable being, and joy is a stranger to his bosom.

2. The second objection to these views of the doctrine of rewards and punishments is, that appearances are against them.

It often happens that the righteous are afflicted and the wicked prospered far above their deserts. Humble virtue groans in poverty and distress, under the pressure of all the ills that "flesh is heir to;" and vice rejoices in its day, surrounded with all the world calls good and fortunate. How can this be reconciled with the justice of God, or the doctrine of just rewards and punishments *in the earth*, as taught in the Bible? To this it would be sufficient to reply, that happiness flows not from outward circumstances; but has its source in the mind itself. Hence, judgment founded upon outward appearances alone, is, and must be frequently erroneous. But I wish to be somewhat more particular, and I will present the subject in a strong light. Here are two men who are neighbours. One is rich. Health blesses his habitation and prosperity crowns his labours. The riches of India are wafted to his door upon the wings of every wind, and he is surrounded with an

abundance of all the good things of this world. But he is a sinner, of no ordinary cast. He loves neither God nor man, but in his grasping avarice, and the excess of his pride, defies the one, and tramples on the other. The other man is poor. His humble cot is the abode of sickness and pain and through toil and suffering he labours for a scanty pittance, scarce sufficient to keep himself and children from starvation. But he is a virtuous man. He loves God and his neighbour, and walks uprightly. Now the question is, which of these men is the happiest? I confess, that there is no method by which we can weigh the amount of happiness enjoyed by either. But we can try them, and see how the matter stands, in their own estimation. Go to that rich man, and in moments of sober reflection, when the effervessence of the glass or the din of business has left him to himself, say to him, You appear anxious and troubled about many things. What would you be willing to give for the quietude and joy that dwells in the humble cottage of that poor, but virtuous man? He will tell you, that he would give all that he has on earth. If he could gain the peace of mind enjoyed by that excellent man, his gold would be but dross, and he would count it as nothing, and less than nothing and vanity. But go to that good man, and try him. Tell him he can become as rich as his neighbour, and have all his possessions. But he must consent to make a sacrifice of his virtue and become not only as rich but as wicked. What for an answer would you receive? Why, he would say to you as the Saviour said to Peter, "Get thee behind me Satan for thou art an offence unto me." Give me my poverty, but save me from sin. Give me my distress, but come weal or come wo, "my righteousness I will hold

fast." You see then, that this man, notwithstanding appearances are so much against him, is possessed of a jewel more precious than gold, and more desirable in his eyes than the riches of Ophir or all the gems of India's richest mines. Why then should his poverty be urged as an objection to his happiness? Poor indeed he is, in this world's goods, but rich in faith, rich in love, rich in good works, ay, RICH in those durable possessions that fade not away, that moth or rust doth not corrupt, and to which thieves cannot break through and steal. The other is rich in earthly goods. But poor in faith, poor in love, poor in righteousness, and worse than a beggar in every thing that can make him happy. Under these circumstances I cannot regard the unequal distribution of this world's goods, or any apparently unequal division of the common afflictions of life, as sufficient to destroy the truth of the position, that the good man is happy in his virtue, and the bad man, miserable in his vice.

3. It is objected to this doctrine of rewards and punishments, that the same acts are not universally deemed criminal.

One individual is educated to believe that a particular act is criminal, and he feels condemned and miserable when he performs it; another is taught, that this same act is not criminal, and he does it without the least compunction. The Bible has never circulated over but a part of the earth, and if this contains the moral law upon which rewards and punishments are founded, then the greater part of the world is without a law, and consequently without rewards and punishments upon the principles of that law. Moreover the fact, that one man's conscience scourges him for the same act, that another will approve, is deemed good evidence, that

there are no such moral laws written upon the heart, as I have contended. To this I reply, that the existence of man's moral nature, subject to certain immutable laws is one thing; and the *revelation* of those laws in the Bible is another, and these two ought not to be confounded. These laws may exist and man may be ignorant of them. Take the laws of man's physical constitution as an illustration. There are certain laws to be regarded for the preservation of the health of the body. Whether men know these laws and regard them, or not, does not effect their existence, or have any influence upon the consequences of their violation. If an ignorant savage unwittingly takes poison, it will injure him as soon and as deeply, as if he had been acquainted with its nature. In this light I look upon the moral constitution of man. It has its laws which must be observed, in order to preserve the moral health. Their being hid or revealed does not effect the fact of heir existence, nor will it alter the legitimate consequences of their violation. I care not what a man's education may be. I say this, God has so made men, that if they would be happy they must love one another and be kind, and a neglect of this, whether in saint or savage, will be followed with misery. Anger and hatred can no more make a savage happy than they can a Christian, and if he gets intoxicated he will suffer the consequences as any other man would. Now I come to the point of the argument. Where these laws are known and their obligations and sanctions are understood, there the criminality of disobedience is increased, and there conscience commences her work, and chastens the sinner sore for his crimes. I will take a strong case as an illustration. It shall be the sin of intemperance, and I select this because its

effects are more outward and visible, though not more sure than those of other crimes. Here is a man who knows the law which enjoins temperance in all things, and acknowledges its authority. There is a poor mortal who has come to believe it a duty to practice intemperance. The first of these falls into the habitual and excessive use of intoxicating drinks. He suffers in his body the consequences, and in addition to this the remorse of an accusing conscience. The other commits the same act, but he has no remorse. He even glories in it, as praiseworthy. But will this save him from the common consequences of drunkenness? Will it prevent the red eye, the bloated countenance, and the palsied limb? No; for this law of temperance cannot be violated with impunity, even though ignorantly done. I grant you that the ignorant man suffers the least, and so he ought, for he is the least criminal. But they were both punished, and that too, upon the obvious principle of justice laid down in Scripture, "He that knoweth his master's will and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knoweth it not shall be beaten with few." Mark, it does not say he shall not be beaten at all. And why? Simply because the law is written upon his moral nature, and every infraction must be followed by its evil consequences. The revelation of this law to any individual, lays him under increased obligations of obedience, and of course increases his criminality, and subjects him to severer punishment. The same principles are true when referred to the subject of rewards. Those who are without a revelation of the laws of God are a law unto themselves, and if by nature they do the things contained in the law, they shall in no case lose their reward. Hear then, the conclusion of the whole matter.

The laws of man's moral nature require us to love one another, for in this our highest happiness consists. To some this law is revealed, and others are ignorant of it. If those to whom it is revealed transgress, they suffer, not only the natural consequences of transgression, but the remorse of conscience. Thus they are beaten with many stripes. If those who are ignorant of it by revelation, hate one another, they escape to be sure, any remorse of conscience, but they do violence to the best principles of their own nature, and injure themselves. Thus they are beaten with fewer stripes. These things are not theory but fact. I lay it down as a truth which no man with a smattering of knowledge of the human mind can dispute, that no son of Adam can possibly hate another without detracting from his own happiness; or love his fellows and do them good, without increasing the sum of his joys. Whether he ever saw or heard of a Bible or not, this principle is true, and upon it the whole doctrine of rewards and punishments is founded; for all the law is fulfilled in one word, even this: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." It only remains to apply the subject to the object for which I entered upon its investigation. The Bible teaches in all its parts, that God has established his laws, and that the good and obedient shall be rewarded, and the disobedient punished. If I have proved that this is true, then I have proved that the Bible so far, speaks the language of truth and soberness. I am conscious of having laboured under the disadvantage of treading in an almost unbeaten path. The world of professing Christians have been so long engaged in searching for rewards and punishments beyond the curtain of death, that little or no light has been thrown upon those facts and phenomena of mind which prove that these rewards and

punishments are to be found where the Bible places them, *in the earth.* He that would investigate this subject can derive little aid from the labours of his predecessors. He must take his own light along with him, and plod his way through hosts of prejudices, and the accumulated darkness of ages, and he may congratulate himself at last if he can leave behind him a few landmarks which may guide the future traveller on his way. If I have done even thus much, I am satisfied.

One idea more and I have done. It appears to me that the perfect harmony which subsists between the laws of man's moral nature, and the *revealed* laws of the Bible, affords a strong argument in favour of the divine original of the latter. The wisdom of man has been tasked in vain to invent a code of moral laws which should be so well adapted to man's moral nature that obedience would secure his highest happiness. But he that made the moral man knew what laws were suitable for him, and the perfect adaptation of the one to the other, is a strong presumptive argument that they both came from the same hand. The perfect adaptation of food to the wants of the body is no better evidence that it was made by the same God, than is this adaptation of the revealed laws of God to man's moral nature an evidence that they came from the same source.

DISCOURSE VIII.

DIVINE PROMISES.

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises.
2. Peter i. 4.

The Bible is valuable as a declaration of present truth, and as a record of things that are past. But it is not less valuable when viewed as a revelation of things that are to come. Its history is good; its teachings are desirable; but more precious than all are its promises of grace, which penetrate the darkness of the future, and give man a foretaste of joys yet in reserve for him. Hitherto, I have confined my attention to those teachings of Scripture which apply to the present, and the past, and I now turn my attention to those "great and precious promises" which refer to the future. I have shown that the Bible teaches the existence, power, wisdom, goodness, justice and government of God, and that nature, experience and reason sanction these teachings. According to the text, there are certain "exceeding great and precious promises" in the Bible; and the question now before us is, whether these promises are consistent with the character and government of such a God as has been previously delineated? If so, they are entitled to credit. But if it shall be found upon examination, that the promises of the Bible in relation to the future, do not harmonize either with the character of God, or the exhibitions of his government, in

times past; then surely they cannot reasonably be supposed to come from God. That God is powerful, wise, just and good, is testified by nature, providence, and revelation, and must be regarded as most sacredly true. It matters not what doctrines come in contact with these truths, or in what book they are found; all such must be as false as *these* are true. The tree is known by its fruit, and the fountain by the waters that it sends forth. Hence if any of the promises of the Bible betray a lack of power, wisdom, goodness or justice, it will appear to the reasonable mind as utterly impossible that they should come from God, as it would be for a sweet fountain to send forth bitter waters. But if, on the other hand, it shall be found that these promises are marked with the power, wisdom, justice and goodness of God, and harmonize with the known and established principles of his government; then indeed will they carry along with them the resistless evidence of their divine origin, and we can with as much certainty pronounce that they came from God, as we can decide from whence sweet waters flow, or good fruit proceeds. The question comes before us in due form; are the promises held forth in the Bible and called exceeding great and precious, such as we might reasonably expect from a God of all power, wisdom, goodness and justice?

I shall pass very briefly over those promises which relate to the dispensations of God's providence with us in this world. It may suffice to observe, in general, that we have in Scripture, assurances of the most faithful guidance, care, kindness and protection of the Most High. If we walk in wisdom's ways, we are most solemnly assured that we shall find abundance of peace, that God will support us in six troubles, and in seven he will not leave nor forsake us. If we transgress, he

here promises that we shall not be unpunished; "he will visit our transgressions with the rod, and our iniquities with stripes, nevertheless, his loving kindness he will not utterly take from us, nor cause his faithfulness to fail." Now, I ask, are not these precisely such promises as we might naturally expect from such a God as the Bible presents for our adoration, and nature and providence teach us to revere? I ask further, have not these promises been verified in your own experience hitherto? It has been a long time since they were made, and where is the man who will dare rise up and say, that he has found them false or deceptive in one solitary instance? You have practised the moral precepts of the Bible. I appeal to you, if you have not found abundance of peace in so doing? I ask, have you not according to the letter and spirit of the promise been supported in six troubles, yea, and in seven also? Tell me, has not your peace been as a river, and the cup of your joy been full? You cannot answer in the negative. No man ever yet walked in wisdom's ways who did not find them ways of pleasantness and all her paths peace. But you have disregarded the voice of wisdom from on high, and have turned your feet into the way of the transgressor. I ask, have you not found from bitter experience, that it is a hard way, beset with thorns and briers on every side? Have you not found God faithful to his promise in visiting your transgressions with the rod, and your iniquities with stripes? If these things are so, and that they are, no mortal man will venture to dispute, then permit me to ask, what possible reason there can be for the supposition that it will not be so in future? If God has been faithful to the fulfilment of these promises in time that has passed, what good reason can any man render for disputing the

authenticity or truth of that word which guaranties that it shall be so as long as the world stands? I hold it not in the least at variance with the character of God to say, that he has made just such promises as these, and I envy no man his discernment, who contends that the Bible is false and inconsistent, because it tells us God has promised to give us in future precisely what he has given us all our life long. But there are greater and more precious promises than these, which will now claim our attention. I notice among them,

1. The promise of the forgiveness of sin.

You are aware that the pardon or forgiveness of sin forms no inconsiderable item in the plan of gospel grace; and I could not feel satisfied in passing it over in silence, especially as I know, that it is not unfrequently made a ground of objection against the truth of the Christian religion. You will recollect, that I have argued the positive punishment of sin, from the established laws of man's moral nature. I have shown you that man is so constituted that every infraction of the great law of love revealed in the Bible, is also a violation of the laws of man's moral nature, whose healthful operations are necessary for his happiness, and hence that every sin will meet with a bitter and inevitable reward. There are sceptics of the more moderate stamp who admit this reasoning to be correct. They also contend, that vice will inevitably be punished, and prove it in the manner I have done, from reason and experience. When they have done this they urge it as an objection against Christianity. They say, the Bible teaches as one of its most important doctrines, the forgiveness of sin; thus promising an escape from the punishment of iniquity, which a just God could not promise, and which neither reason or expe-

rience will grant. They therefore contend that it would impeach the justice of God to send a promise of impunity to the vicious and the profligate, and hence they say the Scripture doctrine of forgiveness could not come from God.

Those who reason after this manner would be materially benefited if they would learn their notions of forgveness from the Bible itself, instead of taking them at second-hand from those who claim to be the interpreters of the word. If they will take the trouble to examine the Bible for the purpose of learning what is there taught upon this subject, they will soon be satisfied that the remission of just punishment forms no part of the Scripture doctrine of forgiveness.. It is no doubt true, that there are many professed Christians who are in the same error with themselves, but it is not the less erroneous on that account. The Scriptures do indeed treat somewhat largely upon the forgiveness of *sin*, and frequently promise it to the world; but there are some who do not seem to distinguish between *sin* and *punishment*, and these need to be told, that though the Bible abounds in promises of forgiveness, it is always the forgiveness of *sin;* and they will for ever search in vain for a promise which gives assurance of the forgiveness of just and adequate punishment. On the contrary, the testimony of Scripture is uniform and most emphatic, that "God will by no means clear the guilty," and "he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong that he hath done;" yea, even though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished." In this light it may be seen that the Scriptures are in perfect harmony with reason and experience, in teaching the sure and inevitable punishment of vice; and against this principle the doctrine of forgiveness or pardon, when correctly understood

does not in the least militate. It is the forgiveness or pardon of *sin*, not the remission of punishment or a promise of impunity to the criminal. That these views of the harmony between the Scripture doctrine of forgiveness and the fact of punishment, are correct, may be seen from a single quotation: "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, and her injquity is pardoned, for *she hath received* of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." Again it is said of God, that he is "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and that he will by no means clear the guilty." From these quotations it is perfectly evident that there was in the minds of the sacred penmen no clashing between the idea of forgiveness and just punishment; and they had no notion that a promise of forgiveness of sin, was also a promise to free from just and proper punishment, for sin actually committed. To pardon or forgive sin, as the sacred writers use these terms, is not to omit the just punishment of actual transgression, for this God says he will not by any means do: but it is to remove, blot out, or take away sin itself.* Hence, Christ is said to have come, not to deliver the sinner from justice, but to "save his people from their sins;" and the same sentiment is conveyed where he is called the "Lamb of God, that taketh away (forgiveth) the sin of the world." For this purpose, "he was once offered that he might put away (forgive or pardon) sin by the sacrifice of himself." Now let us look at the promise of forgiveness in this, its true and proper light. Behold, "he will finish sin. make an end of transgression, and

* See note L

bring in everlasting righteousness." He shall "subdue all things unto himself," to him "every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess," and "all thrones and dominions shall serve and obey him." These are the "great and precious" promises which the doctrine of forgiveness and pardon calls us to contemplate, and the question to which I invite your attention is, whether they are not worthy the character of a God of power, wisdom, goodness and justice? and whether the established principles of his government manifested in the history of the world, will not warrant us in the conclusion, that they will in due time, be accomplished? They are certainly promises that could be safely made by no being but one possessed of power far above what is possessed by man. They are such as an Almighty God alone would venture to make, or attempt to fulfil. It would also require wisdom to bring order out of confusion, and adapt means to the accomplishment of an end so vast, so stupendous, and which must be effected too in accordance with the complicated machinery of mind and motive already in operation. It is a work that the rash hand of folly could not undertake with any reasonable prospect of success, and a promise that would argue madness in any being who was not possessed of infinite wisdom. When it is considered that man's highest happiness consists in obedience to the laws of heaven, and that the way of sin is hard and miserable, *goodness* will shine conspicuously from that promise which guaranties to all an exemption from the sorrows of sin, and the full fruition of those joys that flow in perennial streams in the way of virtue and holiness. In like manner justice would sanction the end contemplated in the promise. God as the Creator and preserver of all, has claims upon their obedience

founded in the strictest justice; and it is perfectly consistent with the character of a just God to destroy all injustice and enforce that perfect obedience which his law requires. You see then, that this promise of the forgiveness and destruction of all sin, bears the impress of its Divine Author. It is precisely such a promise as a God of power, wisdom, goodness and justice, would be likely to make, and his whole character affords ground for the reasonable expectation that it will be fulfilled.

But there are other considerations which lead us to anticipate the fulfilment of these promises. The very nature of sin itself is an argument to this end. It contains the seeds of its own dissolution, and needs little more than the workings of its own discordant materials to effect its overthrow. It is like the fire that consumes; it will go out at last, for the want of fuel. Anger cannot always burn, for its fires will consume the very source from whence they draw their heat. The spirit of war and contention, if left to its own workings, would destroy itself, and compel men from dire necessity to seek peace and preserve it. On the contrary the virtues enjoined upon us in the Bible are necessary to our happiness, and they have a self-perpetuating power, which must give them an immortal existence. That they are absolutely necessary, and that man could not exist without them, is evident from the fact, that they are to be found in some degree even among the most abandoned of our race. Pirates and thieves are absolutely compelled to practice some degree of honesty among themselves. Without it, they could not live in social compact. Now if such is the absolute necessity of adherence to virtuous principles, if virtue is thus indispensable, and vice so destructive of human happi-

ness, it will be strange indeed, if man with a love of enjoyment for the mainspring of every action, does not some day learn where the glittering prize may be found, and discover and avoid the poison of vice. These considerations alone would lead us to count that promise, not the most incredible, which guaranties the ultimate destruction of all sin and the universal reign of righteousness and true holiness. And then when it is reflected that God himself is holy, and that streams of immortal purity are flowing from his throne, to water the earth, and purge out every thing that offends; when it is remembered that vice stands opposed to his character as well as to the principles of his holy government, there need be no hesitation or fear of credulity, in believing in all its length and breadth, that promise, which guaranties the utter downfall of the kingdom of darkness and the establishment of holiness in every heart. I contend therefore, that when the Bible teaches God will forgive, take away or destroy all vice and iniquity, it teaches that he will do just what we might expect from such a God as nature and revelation unite in teaching us to recognise and adore. This promise is therefore, a "faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation."

2. The next and chief among the "great and precious promises," is that which gives the gracious assurance of life and immortality beyond the grave.

This is indeed the chief and crowning excellency of the gospel of Christ, and with it Christianity must stand or fall. Destroy this and you destroy all that can render the religion of Jesus dear to the heart, as a revelation which penetrates the future world. It is true, that without it, the moral precepts would be valuable; but it would lose its chief glory, inasmuch as it

would be rendered powerless in the warfare with the king of terrors, and even its moral precepts would lose that sanction and authority, which they derive from the resurrection of its author from the dead. In the gospel God promises to raise a world from the slumbers of the grave to life immortal, and as an earnest of that inheritance, has raised Christ from the dead. So the Scriptures teach, and an examination and defence of this doctrine will be the subject of this and some succeeding discourses. This doctrine has been assailed by sceptics, with perhaps more zeal and confidence than any other feature of Christianity, and hence I shall be under the necessity of giving it a more enlarged and diligent examination than I have bestowed upon any other principle of revealed religion that I have passed in review.

I must remark in the outset, that a mass of tradition and folly has been thrown around this doctrine, which has rendered many of the attempts to vindicate it little better than darkening counsel by words without knowledge. From this circumstance it has happened, that the arguments of infidelity, have been directed to the corruptions which superstition has introduced, rather than the genuine doctrine itself, as taught in the Bible. It is therefore necessary for me before I proceed to a vindication of the resurrection, to remove the rubbish by which its beauty has so long been obscured, and its legitimate effects lost to the church. I will not undertake to defend those heathen fables and childish superstitions, which interested or ignorant mortals have endeavoured to palm upon the world by baptizing them in the name of Christ. My business is to defend the gospel, as it came from its author. I would therefore, separate the dross from the gold, and if man has sown

tares with the wheat, I cannot avoid, however much I may regret the necessity, of turning aside from the legitimate object of these discourses, to pluck them up and consign them to the fire to be burned. If I can succeed in presenting the doctrine of life and immortality clearly before you in this discourse—in tearing away the veil which has so long obscured its beauty, and in showing that some of the most prominent objections against it, are aimed at the doctrines of men, rather than the promise of God, it will be as much as I expect. In relation to the scripture doctrine of the resurrection from the dead, I remark

1. It is widely different from the ancient heathen doctrine of the soul's immortality, and ought never to be confounded with it, or mistaken for it.

Some of the ancient philosophers said, that the soul was immortal; and for aught I know they told the truth; but of this one thing I am certain, that none of them were Christians, nor did they teach the Christian doctrine. Nor am I willing to allow that it was Plato instead of Christ, that first brought life and immortality to light. I am sensible that this doctrine has been incorporated with Christianity, and that at this day it appears inwoven with the whole texture of the gospel. So highly important is it viewed by the professors of religion, that one who listens to their constant harping upon the theme of immortal souls, would be almost ready to conclude, that the gospel is little else than a new and improved version of Plato's philosophy. I wish to be distinctly understood upon this subject. I do not say that man has not an immortal soul. I will grant, that there are some arguments in favour of that doctrine which are plausible at least, and there are also others against it of which the same may be said. But

this I do say, the *Bible* clearly and plainly reveals no such doctrine, and if held at all it should be held as a philosophical opinion, rather than a clear doctrine of revelation. As a philosophical theory, I have no objections to the doctrine of the soul's immortality. It may be true for aught I know to the contrary, but I do most seriously object to laying that doctrine of heathen origin, as a burden upon the neck of Christians, and more strongly still do I feel bound to protest against the principle, of taking the glory of the revelation of life and immortality from Christ, to bestow upon a set of heathen philosophers who flourished long before his day. I aver, that the only ground of hope for life immortal, presented in the sacred volume, is THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, to be accomplished by the mighty power of God.* The ancients believed in the immortality of the soul, long before the days of Christ, and upon this foundation they reared a trembling hope, that they should live again. But this is not the foundation upon which the Christian should build. God has laid in Zion a corner stone, tried and precious, upon which we may found our hopes. That stone is Christ and his triumphant resurrection from the dead. To this the Christian is pointed, with the assurance that other foundation can no man lay than that which is here laid. I care not how much or how long this stone may have been set at naught by the builders, it is, and it must ever be the head of the corner. I have noted this circumstance, because it is in itself a sufficient answer to all sceptical objections against Christianity, which are aimed at the soul's immortality. They all go wide of the mark. It belongs not to the Christian to answer them, for they touch not the proper foundation of his

* See note J.

hope. It matters not how cogently you may reason against the soul's immortality, for you are not reasoning against Christ, but the philosophers. I will not therefore, pause to enter upon the merits of your argument. It belongs to those who build upon this foundation to perform this work. For me I say with Paul, "if Christ be not risen my hope is vain;" "but now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept." Henceforward, if any man wishes to overthrow the Christian hope of life and immortality, let him lay hold of the doctrine of the resurrection, and if he can remove that corner stone, the superstructure will fall.

2. There is another doctrine which is now generally considered inseparable from the one I have had under consideration which must not be passed over, I allude to the doctrine of interminable suffering.

It is commonly believed that there will be in the future world a general judgment, when all men shall be assembled before their final judge, to receive that sentence from which there is no appeal, and which will fix their eternal interests beyond the possibility of any alteration. Then some will be received to immortal bliss and others sink into the hopeless miseries of perpetual despair. I am conscious that it is a hard task to convince people, that this is not Christianity. It has been believed so long, and preached so much, that although it were the very "abomination of desolation standing where it ought not," it would claim the place by possession, and it were hard to persuade the world that it was out of place. But however long and sincerely this doctrine of perpetual wo has been believed, I fearlessly aver, that if I had the remotest idea it was embraced in the promises of the Bible, I would not

stand here pleading for its truth. In my humble estimation such a sentiment would, if it were found in the sacred book be sufficient to warrant the conclusion that it came not from God. It contradicts the character of God as therein presented, and as proclaimed by the voice of nature. Such a sentiment can no more harmonize with the idea of a God, possessed of infinite power, wisdom, goodness and justice, than light can harmonize with darkness; and it can no more flow from such a God, than streams of death can issue from the fountain of life. Hear the argument of the sceptic for one moment. Christian, says he, you profess to believe in a God of infinite goodness, and yet you say he will call up from the grave millions of his creatures for the sole and only purpose of tormenting them with inconceivable pain without mitigation, without mercy, and without end. You profess to believe in a God of justice, and yet you tell us, that he will inflict an infinite punishment for a crime to which it can bear not the least imaginable proportion. You profess to believe in a God of wisdom and power, and yet the plan of his government was so unwisely contrived, that it involves an infinite evil, which God has no power to prevent. He is wise and powerful indeed; but the adversary by his superior tact or power carries away in triumph the greater part of his children. *I* adore the God of nature. I see his power in the stars that glitter in the firmament above! I read his wisdom in the movements of the mighty machine of the universe! I behold his goodness in the beams of the sun, and in the gently falling shower, and I trace the footsteps of his justice in the history of man. But your Bible, that changes power into tyranny, wisdom into folly, goodness into partiality, and that stains the altar of justice

with the acts of cruelty; was never written
hand which wrote great nature's volume, nor
down from him. Thus reasons the sceptic, and
no fault to find with this reasoning, for I seriously
that neither ingenuity nor sophistry can evade th
of the conclusion if the premises are granted.
reasoning is good, its premises only are in fault
not true, as the argument supposes, that these do
are taught in the Bible; and hence the arg
touches not Christianity. I am perfectly satisfi
these doctrines can *never* be defended as comin
God. They have long borne with a mountain's
upon the cause of Christ. In my judgment the
done more to advance the cause of infidelity
the united efforts of every infidel, that ever
The eloquence of Hume, and the caustic ligh
of Voltaire, are harmless in the comparison;
pend upon it, unless they are purged out of the
Christianity, with all that is joyful in its hopes
rious in its promises, must struggle on with diff
that have long retarded its progress. They are
ries in the name of Christ, and all the eloque
Cicero or Demosthenes could not establish thei
to a common origin, with those "lectures of he
wisdom" read by the stars and repeated by the
When therefore I stand before you and after my
manner plead for the truth of Christianity, I wis
understood. I am not pleading for a system of s
murder and cruelty. I plead not for the endless
ing of my fellow-creatures, for I *could* not plead
a cause. Do not expect me to defend these senti
nor think that Christianity cannot be defended b
these are disproved. Let the infidel understan
in contending with these for the gospel of Chris

as one that beateth the air. He may raze them every one to the foundation, and yet he has not touched one stone in the temple of Christ, nor offered an argument against his teachings. I speak with much confidence here, for I feel that I stand upon a rock, and I should be recreant to duty if I did not labour to wipe this darkest, foulest stain from the fair face of the Lord's anointed. I say then emphatically, that those who have been labouring to unite these sentiments with Christianity, have been striving (and I wot that it was through ignorance that they have done it) to bring about an unholy union between Christ and Belial, with whom he has no concord. I say then go on, and destroy this monster of error. Let him die the death, and when his unseemly carcase is lowered into the earth, I will stand over the grave and will pray that no fiend from the infernal pit may sound his resurrection trumpet. But think not that Christianity would die with it, or even clothe itself in sackcloth on this account. Nay, but purified from its deepest corruptions, and relieved from a body of sin and death, that has borne it down and wasted its strength, and crippled its power, it would arise in its beauty and go forth to renewed and more glorious conquests.

It will now be distinctly understood that in defending the Bible I have nothing to do with its corruptions. The doctrine of the resurrection therein taught is plain and simple. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive," is a precious promise which guaranties the resurrection of all men from the dead. In regard to the state or condition of men in the resurrection, the Scriptures do not like the systems of men descend to particulars. The Saviour says, that they "shall be as the angels of God which are in heaven."

Paul says, they shall "all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye; this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruptible shall put on incorruption." These are the "exceeding great and precious promises," for the reasonableness, truth, and propriety of which I contend. This is Christianity as it came from its author; and these are the principles at which infidelity should direct its weapons, if it would assail the gospel of Christ. I maintain, that there is nothing in these promises inconsistent with the character of a God of infinite power, all-knowing wisdom, unbounded goodness, and impartial justice. On the contrary, they are such promises as such a God would be likely to make. The very idea that such a God would exert his attributes in the creation of man, and in enduing him with all his astonishing powers, capable of infinite improvement, merely to live a few days on earth and then fall into the gulf of oblivion, before he has arrived at half the perfection of which he is capable; looks to me rather of a doubtful character. Here is man, created a rational intelligent being, with desires reaching after immortality, and with powers capable of rising to higher and yet higher degrees of perfection. He feeds upon the bounty of God for a few years and the fell destroyer comes to demand his vital breath. He clings to life with an undying grasp, and calls upon God for a blessing; but the heavens are brass, the treasures of divine goodness are exhausted, and God himself has not another good to grant. The stern mandate goes forth, and man who bears the image of his Maker, with all his exalted powers, falls beneath the dark waves of oblivion's sluggish stream, and lives no more for ever. Do not talk to me of infinite goodness in God with such a prospect before me. Unless the goodness of God is

bounded by life's contracted span, we may hope for blessings beyond the Jordan of death. I do not say that the attributes of God are able to give positive proof of the doctrine of the resurrection, but I do say, that they afford a presumptive argument in its favour. If there is a God of power, wisdom and goodness, we may reasonably trust in a resurrection. Take the doctrine of the resurrection of all men from the dead to immortal felicity, and the doctrine of death an endless sleep; lay them along side of the character of God as revealed in Scripture, and taught in nature, and you need not be long in deciding which is most consistent with that character. The promise of life and immortality looks like the promise of God, and once admit his existence and no man can disprove it. This subject will be continued in my next lecture, and for the present I dismiss it, praying, that wisdom from above may be our guide to the temple of truth.

DISCOURSE IX.

RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.

Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead? Acts xxvi. 8.

In my last discourse I had under consideration the promises of God which relate to the future, and endeavoured to show their harmony with the divine character as presented in the Bible and taught in nature and providence. I alluded particularly to the promise of a resurrection to immortal life and felicity, as the chief among all the promises, and endeavoured to show that it was such a promise as we might reasonably expect from a God of all wisdom, power and goodness. I said that I would on the present occasion, enter further into an examination of this doctrine. The text I have selected will give you an idea of the view I intend taking of the subject in this lecture. I purpose merely to inquire into the credibility or incredibility of the doctrine itself, without agitating particularly the positive evidence by which it is sustained.

There are many in this day who consider the account of the resurrection of Christ to be entirely fabulous; and the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, utterly incredible. Man dies, and his body moulders back to its native dust, and that God should ever raise him from the dead, they regard too incredible to be believed. To this point your attention is invited in this discourse. Looking at the subject with the eye of reason, I shall

endeavour to show you that there is nothing in the doctrine which renders it a thing incredible. I am the more inclined to take this view of the subject, because I am persuaded that this idea of the incredibility of the doctrine is the cause of more scepticism in relation to it, than any lack of evidence in its favour. Most of those who have rejected the doctrine of the resurrection, have done it, not so much from a conviction that the evidence in its favour is insufficient to establish the truth of an ordinary event, as from a supposition that it is in its very nature incredible. Now while this conviction remains, arguments are of but little use, for no amount of evidence can convince a man that an impossibility is true. You will therefore perceive, that the work before us at this time, is not *positively* to prove the doctrine, but the settlement of a previous question, in regard to the amount of evidence necessary for its proof. I shall attempt to show that it involves nothing impossible, or incredible, and hence it is to be believed upon the same amount of evidence that would be required to establish any other important doctrine. I remark

I. The doctrine involves no *impossibility*.

Looking at the subject, not particularly as a Christian, but in the light of reason, I contend that the resurrection of the dead is not impossible. The argument by which I sustain the position is simply this: Man does now exist, and as he is not necessarily self-existent, he is the production of some power, and I maintain that the same cause which was adequate to the creation of man at first, is also adequate to his resurrection from the dead. I care not, so far as the validity of the argument is concerned, to what cause you ascribe the present existence of man. Whether he originated

in mere chance, or is the effect of the laws of matter, or came from the hand of a wise and powerful Creator; in either case, the cause which first brought him into existence, is adequate to his resurrection. If he came into existence by chance, then there is nothing incredible in the supposition that some lucky chance may raise him from the dead. If the operation of the laws of matter made man what he is, then I contend that there is nothing impossible, or even incredible in the supposition that these laws will make him what the Bible says he shall be in the resurrection. If I can believe that matter operated upon by nothing save its own inherent powers could move and arrange itself in such a manner as to make man at first, then am I also prepared to believe that the same cause can gather together the fragments that death and corruption leave, and reorganize man in a resurrection from the dead. If the latter is a miracle the former is a still greater miracle. I ask any reasonable man to look at matter, on the one hand, slumbering in chaos or floating at random, obedient only to its elementary laws, without form and void; and on the other, to look at a sleeping corpse, and tell me which he would select as the easiest subject from which to make a living man? Judging from the soundest principles of reasoning, we should come to the conclusion that it would require a less effort of power and wisdom to reanimate that corpse than it would to mould and animate a man from the dust of the earth. The latter of these has been done by some power, and as what has been done may be again, so I maintain that the former involves no impossibility. We all know that we do exist, as the effect of some cause; and with the same certainty we know, that a stream cannot rise higher than the fountain, or an effect be

rior to its cause; we may also know, that man, ther he walk the earth or sleep in the grave, ther living or dead, in time or in eternity, cannot superior to the control of that cause in which he nated. So then, even the atheist himself cannot n that it is impossible for man to rise from the , for he knows, and you know, that greater won- than that have occurred in the univefse. Even the mon subterfuge of a progression in the scale of be- which refers the origin of man not immediately to one cause, but to an infinite series of causes and ts, will not evade the point of the argument. I before alluded to this theory, and attempted to v that it is a bare hypothesis, destitute alike of dation in philosophy or fact; and I now remark, even if it were true, it would not answer the pur- to which it is here applied. If you contend that has progressed through the different grades of be- from those that are but one remove from inanimate er, up to his present state; how dare you affirm he has now come to a full stand, or that the pro- sive work will cease when his head is laid in the e? How dare you affirm that a purer and more ted existence may not rise from the ashes of the l, as the butterfly does from the worm, and thus the ressive work go on, bearing man onward and up- l, till he shall ripen in glory and shine in the gar ts of immortality? Upon your own ground, the g is not impossible, and in view of the mighty prog- already made, it cannot be considered even in- ible. But I will not dwell longer upon this argu- t. I point you to the fact that man does now exist, I say that his present existence is as great a miracle ould be his resurrection from the dead, and as the

one has been done, there is nothing impossible i
doctrine that the other will be done also.*

I have said that even the atheist could not de
possibility of the resurrection of the dead. But
the existence of a God and the question is plac
yond all controversy. That the same God who c
heaven and earth and all that dwell therein, coul
were so disposed, raise man from the dead, the
be no doubt. You have only to look at what G
done in order to see this subject in its proper
Time was, if time it may be called, when the ear
without form and void. The moon and the star
not in heaven, and the fires of the sun were n
kindled. Darkness lay upon the face of broad an
chaos, and the embryo of man's existence had n
gun. It was the spirit of the Lord Almight
moved forth upon the dark waters and roused th
verse into life, and infused order and harmony t
all its parts. He moulded the earth in the hol
his hand, and launched it from his throne to pur
way for ever. He kindled the fires of the sun an
nished the face of the moon, and garnished the h
with stars. His voice called man into existenc
his spirit breathed life and activity through the
peopling the solitary places with every living
These things God has done, and who shall lin
workings of his power? Say, is the arm of th
Omnipotent shortened, that it cannot save?
power crippled, that it cannot work? Shall the
grave rear a barrier full and impassable before
shall death wrest his creatures from the compass
power? Will you plant yourself upon the line
tomb, and say to the waves of the river of life fl

* See note K.

from God above, "Thus far shalt thou go and no further?" Presumptuous man! It *was* possible for God to create thee at first, and it *is* possible for him to raise thee from the dead; and these trophies of his divinity should teach thee to be modest in saying that any work, however great, is too much for him to perform. Thus far we may proceed with safety, and pronounce with a good degree of certainty, that there is nothing in the Scripture doctrine of the resurrection which renders it absolutely impossible. It may therefore be believed upon proper testimony.

II. I proceed to show that the promise of a resurrection held forth in the Bible is not only possible, but it so perfectly accords with the character of God, and the known and established principles of his government, that its fulfilment is a credible and even probable event.

In this department of my subject I have nothing to do with those who deny the existence of a God. I speak to those who acknowledge the existence of a wise and intelligent Creator; and yet deem the doctrine of the resurrection incredible. One of the most fruitful causes of scepticism upon this subject is, the supposition that it would involve too great a stretch of condescension on the part of God. The sceptic is sometimes heard to say, that he can believe without difficulty in a God who is employed in regulating worlds, and systems of worlds, because this is a work which from its magnitude, would seem befitting the character of a being possessed of infinite power and wisdom. But that a being so great, should stoop from his high and exalted throne, to raise up from the dead such humble and puny worms as we are, is to him incredible in a high degree.

To this it is sufficient to reply, that God did create

man at first; but who ever thought it beneath his dignity to be engaged in making such worthless worms as we are? It would take but a moment's reflection to satisfy any man that God has made apparently much less important creatures than man. It was not inconsistent with the glory and dignity of the Holy One to create even the creeping things of the earth. It was not inconsistent with the nature and character of God, to put forth his power in the beginning, and make man from the dust of the earth; and I can see no good reason why he might not raise him from the dead without any degradation of his character. If the existence of man on earth in this low and corrupted estate was an object sufficiently valuable to call into exercise the power of God, how is it that his re-creation in a higher and holier sphere must be deemed too small a work for him. The object in raising men from the dead is as much higher than the object in his formation from the dust, as an immortal existence is more exalted and durable than the present life. If God has done the one, then why should it be thought a thing incredible that he should do the other also?

A consideration of the character of God and the established principles of his government will present the credibility of this doctrine in a still stronger light. I have already noticed its harmony with the divine character, and shown that his power, and wisdom, and goodness, all favour the idea, that he will raise man up from the dead, and it ought to induce us to listen with an attentive and favourable ear, to any evidence that he will fulfil his promise to that effect. There is nothing incredible in the supposition that a wise, powerful and good father will take care of his children. There is no good too great for a God of infinite goodness to

bestow, and all that we have seen of the abundant manifestations of his love, warns us to beware of incredulity, in regard to the future manifestations of that same boundless love. There is, to my mind, nothing incredible in the supposition, that such a God as is presented in nature, and revealed in the Bible, should raise man up from the dead, and make him the immortal recipient of his benefactions. To such a doctrine the experience of the past, and the exhibition of his benevolence, all strongly tend. I need not however repeat the argument upon this subject. I pass on, to compare the doctrine of the resurrection with one of the most strongly-marked and clearly-defined principles of the divine government. I allude to the circumstance that God has provided for all the wants of his creatures, in that sphere in which he has placed them. Throughout all the immensity of creation, there is an invariable fitness of things, an adaptation of one thing to another, which pervades the whole. This principle is clearly developed in the animal economy. Each grade and tribe is fitted to its sphere, and finds in that sphere the necessary means for the satisfaction of all its wants. As an instance in point: the wants of the lion and the tiger are supplied in the solitudes of the desert, and there is not the least evidence, that either of them has any desire to quit his native haunts, and mingle with the crowds of the populous city. The wants of the fish are supplied in the water, and there is no evidence, that he desires to leave his native element and live upon the dry land, nor can we imagine any appetite or desire of the fish, which may not be satisfied with the means that the waters furnish. The same may be said of every animal. You cannot point to one and say, here is a desire or an appetite, for the gratification of which

God has not provided abundant means. He
you see the principle. In all cases God has
means to ends; and wherever you find in any
a desire or appetite, you will find the means
gratification, and in no instance can you find an
or desire for any thing that does not exist. T
aver, you cannot find an exception in the univ
God. The wants of the beast and bird, fish and
are supplied in their appropriate spheres of li
bounded by their native elements, and in no
they overstep these bounds. But how is it witl
Are his wants and desires bounded by earth's
limits? Has he no desires reaching beyond th
ing life? You know the answer that truth mu
to these questions,

> "The soul uneasy and confined from home,
> Rests and expatiates in a world to come."

In the midst of all the earth can give, the n
man pants for purer and more undisturbed rills
God has given to every human being, a deep
ardent and everlasting desire of life and immo
Go where you will, and wherever you find a
being with countenance erect, bearing the imp
his Maker's hand, there you will find this de
ardent desire, impelling man onward, and beari
upward to endless life. Why then should it be
a thing incredible, that God should raise the dea
has left no desires of the beast without the m
gratification, nor given in any case an appe
aught that does not exist. In all creation aro
this principle is discovered. Why should ma
exception? Why should it be thought, that n
last and noblest work of God, has been curse

which his Creator never intended to gratify? which keep him all his life long, in the eager of an "*ignis-fatuus*, that leads to bewilder and to blind?" In the name of reason, why should of goodness be supposed thus to tantalize his es? In the name of all that is consistent, I ask, nall it be said, that God has first chained man to earth, and then cursed him with desires rush- o the skies? Without the doctrine of future life, n can account for those desires for life and im- ity which God has planted deep in every human nless he at the same time charges God with a are from a rule of his government, which holds all other beings. Neither can any one tell why lone of all God's creatures, should look beyond ive, and pant with anxious solicitude for a dwel- ere. But give me this doctrine, and I can ex- the whole mystery, and clearly see that God by rules, that know no abatement. When he an a desire of life and immortality, it was not alize him, but it was with the benevolent design ing him *here* a foretaste, and ultimately of be- g the blessing. With this view of the subject, longer a matter of wonder, that man looks for- nd upward to heaven and immortality, for his nd his Father are there. But if this doctrine is e, then God has in many instances violated a at he has observed in the case of every animal; meanest reptile that grovels in the dust, holds ure of its existence upon better terms than he. east can live, and eat, and drink, and die, and no s for immortality, nor disappointed hopes of , nor dread of dark annihilation, are mingled up of life. Death comes; he struggles to avoid

the pain, but there is no evidence that he either hopes or fears any thing beyond the veil. Now I say, if man had been destined in the counsels of God to die, and perish like the beast, it is but reasonable to suppose that he would have been made like him, in this respect. I do not say that considerations like these are to be received as *positive* proof of man's resurrection from the dead, but I do say, that they afford some presumptive evidence in favour of that doctrine, and they clearly prove, that it ought not to be looked upon as an incredible thing. I say, that no man who gives these considerations their due weight, is justified in rejecting the doctrine as an incredible story, without an examination of its positive evidences. Whether there is sufficient evidence of the doctrine to warrant us in the belief, that it is positively true is reserved for further inquiry. All I now contend is, that looking at the doctrine abstracted from the evidences of a *direct* and *positive* character, by which it is supported, it is not incredible; and I should say, that the following would be a fair illustration of the case. Here is a philosopher who has never heard of the resurrection of the dead. I go to him and say, Sir, death is not the end of man, for God will raise the dead to life and immortal joy. The idea is new to him, and he would if he were free from all bias be likely to reason after this manner. This is an important doctrine, and I will examine it. I know that man does exist, and that some power brought him into existence, and I cannot deny, that the same power which created him may raise him from the dead. I believe further there is a God of all wisdom power and goodness, and there can be no doubt that such a God can, if he pleases, raise the dead. Besides such an event would accord with all that I know of his character

and government. I find myself possessed of strong desires reaching after immortality, and I cannot see why God should give me these desires unless he meant to bestow the blessing. He then turns to me and says, Sir, I think it quite likely that doctrine of yours may be true. I see nothing impossible or incredible in it, and I am prepared to receive it upon sufficient testimony. What evidence have you that it is true? I reply: I was acquainted with a man, who professed to be sent of God to bear witness to the truth upon this subject. He taught this doctrine and wrought many miracles in confirmation of the divinity of his mission. He said that he would himself rise from the dead, as an example to show that God could, and would raise man up from the grave. I was with him about three years daily and knew him well. His enemies finally put him to death, and on the third day he rose. I saw him after his resurrection, and my friends saw him, and I can now refer you to more than five hundred witnesses who also saw him and know that he rose. The wise man answers: If you can establish *that* fact I shall believe the doctrine. There is nothing impossible or extremely incredible about it. It may be true, and if these facts can be established, it must be so. Now this is precisely the kind of evidence which the Bible gives of the truth of its doctrine of the resurrection. It informs us, that the Saviour taught this doctrine, and said that God should raise him up from the dead for its confirmation; and that he did actually rise according to his word. Whether this account be true or false, will be the theme of our next discourse. The labour of our present discourse thus far, will show you that it is not absolutely an incredible story, and that it should be believed upon the same kind and amount of

evidence, that would be required to establish the truth of any other possible or probable event. Of the amount and force of this evidence you will hear more at another time. The question now before us is, "why should it be thought a thing *incredible* with you, that God should raise the dead." I return to *that* question.

There is another ground upon which the doctrine of the resurrection is thought to be incredible.

It is supposed by some, to be extremely improbable that God would reveal the doctrine even if it were true. In answer to this objection, it should be observed, that the doctrine of the resurrection, if communicated to man at all must, from the very nature of the case, come through the medium of a revelation from God. The character of God as seen in nature, and exhibited in the dispensations of his providence might indeed add an argument in favour of the doctrine, when once revealed, but it could not be deduced *a priori* from any principles of natural Theology, with sufficient clearness to answer a very valuable purpose. It will no doubt be admitted, that God *could* if he chose make such a revelation, and the question before us is, whether his character is such, that he would be likely to do so?

I hold it then as a fact, that all men desire a knowledge of this truth, and that no man without it can arrive at the highest degree of happiness of which he is susceptible. Lay aside all hopes of life and immortality and man is comparatively a miserable being. He sees the night of death approaching, and he fears that it will be endless. He looks down into the deep vault of the grave, and shudders at its darkness, with no hope of release from its long and silent slumber. Under these circumstances, I hold it to be utterly impossible that any man can be as happy as he would be if he were

cheered with strong hope in a triumphant and glorious resurrection.

It has indeed been said, that there is no need of looking to the future, and that it is no more to us what we shall be a thousand years hence, than what we were a thousand years ago. But sure I am, that such an assertion can proceed only from blind bigotry, or a deplorable ignorance of the laws and operations of the human mind. Every man who has paid even a small share of attention to the operations of his own mind, must know, that it is as utterly impossible for him to refrain from looking forward and hoping or fearing, as from looking backward and remembering the past. Nor are the wanderings of his mind bounded by the narrow limits of this life. We know we must die, but the inquisitive eye pauses not at the grave. What awaits us beyond? Shall we sleep in eternal silence there? Or shall we live again? These are questions which force themselves upon the reflecting mind with a power that cannot be resisted, and upon their solution depends much of our enjoyment. To illustrate the point. Two men are about going a voyage at sea. They must both unavoidably look forward and calculate the probable success of the voyage. The one is animated with joyful hope. He believes that he shall reach his destined haven, and meet again his kindred and friends. The other is without hope. He expects no more to meet those friends with whom he parts, but feels certain that he shall find a watery grave. You may tell these men as much as you will, that there is no need of looking at the future, and yet it will be true, that one will go with a sorrowing and the other with a rejoicing heart. Let us drop the figure. Two men stand upon the shore of the boundless ocean

of eternity. They too must look forward and hope or fear. The one gazes, and before him all is darkness and perpetual night, without a star of hope to shine upon its dreadful gloom. He feels the frail system of nature sinking and tottering to its fall, and has no hope but that he shall feed the greedy worm and be no more. The other sees the dark waters of death rolling at his feet. He looks to the future, and a radiant beam of light shoots from the other side of Jordan like the night-fires of the sentinel, gleaming upon the storm-spent mariner who is tossed upon the mountain-wave. Glad hope revives the sinking spirit, and he joyfully sails for the land, "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." Now I say, that a reasonable man need not be long in deciding which of these two men is the happiest. The peace of the one is as a river; but the other is a prey to doubt and fear. From these remarks you will not fail to discover how necessary to human happiness is the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead. I ask you to look around you and tell me, if you are able, of one thing so necessary for your enjoyment as this which God has left unprovided. I wish you to point out some instance where God has been thus careless of your happiness. Unless you can do this, I shall deem the presumption fair that he has been careful to provide for your wants in this respect, as he has in all others. It is for you to decide whether that good Father, who has been so careful to provide for your smallest wants, and whose ear is open to hear the young ravens when they cry, would be likely to forget or refuse to supply this, the highest and holiest desire of the mind. In my humble estimation, the goodness of God, manifested in so many ways and by such an endless variety of means, affords a strong pre-

sumptive argument that he would reveal to man the doctrine of the resurrection, so important to his happiness.

Look for one moment at the light in which a contrary supposition would present his character. If you should see a man watching the declining sun, and knew that he was without hope of ever seeing the light of another morning; if you possessed the least friendly feeling towards him, you would tell him that the sun should rise again in its glory, and he should see it and rejoice. But according to the notion now under consideration, here is man watching the sun of life fast declining. He believes it will set in everlasting night. The shades gather around him, and the poor sufferer has nought in prospect but the blackness of darkness for ever. God looks upon his woes without an eye to pity or an arm to save. One sunbeam from the throne of his glory would scatter the darkness and pour the light of immortal life into the afflicted soul, and yet God withholds it. One cup of water from the eternal fountain would give peace; but though the poor mortal is fainting and dying, and the river of God is full of water, he will not bestow it. He has fully determined to raise man to immortal bliss, but though the whole race go mourning all their days for want of the information, he will not even tell them that such is his purpose. Depend upon it, my hearers, such is not the God of the Bible, nor yet the God of nature, and the ten thousand testimonies of his goodness with which we are surrounded, all reproach the man who harbours such a faith with dishonourable views of his Father in heaven. If his children ask bread he will not give them a stone, or if they ask a fish he will not give them a serpent. The presumption most unquestionably is, that the same God who

giveth to the beast his food, will also hear the cri
his children and give them that bread which they
When I reflect upon the rich comforts and joy
flow from the doctrine of life and immortality rev
in the gospel of Christ, with a grateful heart I am
strained to thank God, that with me it is not a
incredible, that he should raise the dead.

DISCOURSE X.

PROOFS OF THE RESURRECTION.

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. Cor. xv. 20-22.

I PROPOSE in this discourse to prove the resurrection of Christ from the dead, a doctrine upon which all our hopes of future existence must rest for support. The nature of the evidence by which this fact is sustained, is precisely the same as that of other circumstances which are said to have occurred in time past. It depends upon human testimony, and such other collateral circumstances as the nature of the case may afford. That there was such a man as Christ, who lived about eighteen centuries ago, and that he was put to death, I shall take for granted. There is no man who lived so long since, the fact of whose existence, life and death, is sustained by such a mass of evidence; and the man who can dispute this, ought also to dispute that there was any man living at that time. He may select whom he will, and I will engage to prove the life and death of Christ by more ample testimony than he can prove that any other individual lived in that day. It were useless then to spend time upon this point. That there was such a man who lived and was put to death and buried, I set down as a fact which comes to us attested by a mass of evidence which cannot be adduced in

favour of the existence of any other person in such remote antiquity. He lived, and died, and was buried. What are the facts connected with his subsequent history, shall be the question to which I now invite your attention. In answer to this question there are two different versions.

1. The Jews said, that the disciples came and stole away his body, and

2. The disciples said, that he rose from the dead and they saw him and conversed with him, and knew it was so.

It is quite probable that one of these accounts is true; for that a few fishermen could persuade people to believe that he had risen from the dead, in the same city where his body was still sleeping in a sepulchre, which could have been visited at any time, we cannot believe. If the body of Christ could have been found, it would have settled the controversy about his resurrection at once. I therefore conclude that one or the other of these statements is true. Either the disciples stole away his body and secreted it, and then reported that he had risen, or it was true as they asserted, that he did rise. The argument before us shall be reduced to a single point. Which is the more reasonable in itself and supported by the most plain and palpable evidence? We will examine and see. Both sides shall have a hearing, and you shall judge for yourselves.

I. The disciples came and stole him away. This was the story of the soldiers who were placed to guard the tomb where he was laid. There are however several circumstances which serve to throw a deep shade of suspicion over their account. Some of these I shall name.

1. The disciples were not in a proper frame of mind

or in suitable circumstances to embark in such an enterprise. It does not appear that any of them expected he would rise from the dead. They had followed him through the trials that awaited him while on earth, and trusted that he would redeem. They were perfectly well aware of the deep and inveterate hatred with which their countrymen regarded both him and his followers. They had relied upon his power to save, but their last hope in him expired when he breathed out his life upon the cross. Through fear of their enemies, they all forsook him when alive, and why should they cleave to him now that he was dead? There is nothing to warrant the conclusion that they had the courage even if they had the disposition to steal him away. Peter was doubtless the boldest among them. He followed to the judgment hall, when others had left him and fled. But there his courage failed, and he denied his knowledge of the man. Now I ask, is it reasonable to suppose that these same men who fled from Jesus in dismay when living, would suddenly muster courage and risk their lives in an attempt to get possession of his corpse when dead? Would Peter himself be likely to arouse and put his life in jeopardy in an attempt to steal from the well-guarded tomb the body of a man whom he had just sworn that he did not know? The fact is, the disciples were sore afraid during his life, and while they believed in his power; and all the circumstances unite in proving that instead of being inspired with courage by his death, *that* event had no other effect but to deepen their despondency. There are no principles of human nature upon which we can account for the supposition that these timid disciples, with their leader taken from them, and themselves already trembling with fear of their enemies, should sud-

denly awake and brave the power of opposition in an attempt to get the body of a man, a knowledge of whom they dare not avow while he was living. Suppose they had obtained possession of the body of Christ; it would have done them no good, only to enable them to tell a story which they *knew* to be false as perjury, and the declaration of which, they must have been well aware, would subject them to a fate similar to that of their Master. Certain I am, that the man who can believe that these same disciples who a few hours before, while Jesus was alive, fled from him with fear, and dare not confess that they even knew him, are now transformed into such intrepid men that they would dare the soldiers' spear for the purpose of procuring a dead body to lie about, knowing at the same time that the very falsehood they intended to tell would bring down upon their heads the sword of the persecutor, then reeking with the blood of their Master. Such a man ought to be the last to deny miracles, or say aught against sudden and miraculous conversions.

2. It may be doubted whether these soldiers would be likely to sleep as comfortably as they professed, under their circumstances.

Jesus had been among them as a teacher sent from God, and had told them that he would rise from the dead. It was no doubt on this account, that every precaution was taken to prevent his body from being taken away, lest in such a case it should be said that he had risen from the dead. The whole course of procedure in this case, discovers a deliberate determination to crush for ever the cause of Christ, and prevent any further spread of his doctrines. He is carefully placed in a new sepulchre, which was hewn out of a rock, and could of course be entered in no other way but by the

door. This was secured with a large stone, and soldiers were set to guard it. It was also true, that these soldiers were subject to severe punishment for any neglect of duty. They were, moreover, superstitious, and would naturally feel themselves ill at ease under such circumstances. Now I contend, that a reasonable man will not readily believe, that a superstitious soldier, believing in all manner of supernatural beings, watching at the grave of a man who had promised to rise from the dead, and subjected to punishment for neglect of duty, would fall asleep, and sleep so soundly, that the disciples could come and roll away the huge stone from the door and take away the body of Jesus, without disturbing their repose.

3. This story of the soldiers bears the mark of falsehood upon its very face.

"The disciples came and took him away while we slept." If they were asleep all the while, how in the name of common sense did they know what had become of the body of Christ? How happens it then that they are so positive the *disciples* came and stole him? I confess I am unacquainted with any principle of reason or rule of justice, which will allow a man to testify to the particulars of an event which occurred when he was asleep. Those who reject the idea of the resurrection of Christ, frequently make themselves merry with the credulity of Christians, who as they say, believe without good evidence. If I felt so disposed, I might turn the tables upon them in this instance. Ask one of these careful men, who are so wonderfully afraid of receiving the testimony of others, what was done with the body of Christ, and it is ten to one if he does not tell you that the disciples secreted it, and then spread the story that he had risen from the dead. What

is the evidence of all this? Why there is the word of the soldiers who were on the spot, *fast asleep*, when the theft was committed! Surely, the man who will believe the evidence of a witness who testifies to an event which occurred when he was asleep, ought to be the last man to accuse others of credulity. Suppose for instance, that the resurrection of Christ rested upon such proof as this. Suppose the disciples had declared that Christ rose from the dead, and came into their dwellings and conversed with them, but they were asleep at the time; who would have believed them? Not one in Jerusalem. Yet the position of the sceptic rests precisely upon such evidence, and still he talks of the credulity of others! I *know* not but the disciples went and took him away; but one thing I do know; there is not one particle of evidence that such was the fact.

The supposition that he yet remained in the tomb is equally destitute of proof. The apostles commenced preaching in Jerusalem, the very place where their Master was crucified, and if he had still remained in the sepulchre it could have been proved, and those who taught his resurrection for ever confounded. This was not done, and as no stone was left unturned to prevent the spread of the gospel, we are authorized to conclude that it could not be done. Thus much I have said in relation to the story of the soldiers. I pass to notice

II. The account given by the disciples.

They asserted that he rose from the dead. They do not give this as a dream or a vision of sleep, nor yet as a vague conjecture; but they declared that they had seen and handled him, and they knew that it was so. I now come to notice the circumstances which have a bearing upon the credibility of this testimony. I remark

1. The *matter* of the testimony involves nothing impossible, or absolutely incredible.

It is certain that such an event might possibly happen under the government of God. It cannot be doubted that God could, if he saw fit, raise a man from the dead. Neither is there any thing improbable or incredible in the supposition that a wise and good Creator should resuscitate an individual for the purpose of inspiring the hearts of the children of men with a hope that should be to them as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast. All the attributes of God, his power and wisdom, and above all his unbounded goodness, as far as they can have a bearing upon the question, are in favour of the alleged fact, that Christ rose from the dead to testify the truth of that religion which should give the richest cup of consolation that ever came down from God out of heaven. This I have shown in a former discourse, and I need not repeat the arguments on this occasion.

2. The fact alleged by the disciples was one, in relation to which they *could* not be deceived.

I am perfectly aware that the spirit of blind enthusiasm or unthinking credulity will carry men far, and lead them to believe in almost any thing. But it could not have thus operated in the case of the disciples. They had been with Christ for years, in constant and familiar conversation, and may be supposed to have known him well. A stranger could not have assumed his character, and persuaded them that he was indeed the very Jesus with whom they had been so familiar. It was in the open light of day that they saw him, as they say, and they could not be deceived. They *knew* it was him. Besides, there is no evidence that the disciples were particularly credulous. On the contrary, I

feel sure that no man can read the history of t
tercourse with the Saviour without being satis
they were rather incredulous than otherwise.
quently upbraided them with being slow of l
believe, and it is certain that they resisted, i
cases evidence that would be considered over
ing. They saw his miracles as their history sa
their own eyes, and yet they were cautious and
of believing. When he told them that he shoul
to Jerusalem, and there be put to death, Peter
bukad him to his face, and would not believe
withstanding all they had seen of his power, th
was far from being implicit in all his teachings
same spirit of incredulity manifested itself on th
sion of his appearance to the eleven as they sat
after his resurrection. Thomas would not even
the evidence of his own sight, and it was not u
had thrust his hand into the wounded side, and
print of the nails in his hands, that his inc
yielded, and he confessed his Lord. All this d
look like a spirit of easy credulity, which is r
believe any and every thing. From these co
tions, I draw the conclusion, that these men w
deceived through too much credulity. They
entitled to the charity of being *honest*, but *delud*
for if the story of the resurrection was a forgery
one of their own coining, and they knew it to
They either told the truth or they were downrig
postors, for I repeat, it was impossible that they
be deceived. True they were unlearned, and
please ignorant men, but they had eyes and ea
they were neither asleep, nor blind, nor dumb,
any way incapacitated from knowing whether
were dead or alive. They could tell with as li

lity to mistake as the wisest philosopher that ever
'ed, whether they had stolen the body of Christ, or it
as in fact him, that they saw and handled. If he did
ıt indeed rise, then they knowingly and deliberately
mbined to impose this falsehood upon their fellows;
ıd with the most obstinate hardihood persisted in it
ith unanimity even when lingering upon the thresh-
ıld of eternity. This leads me to remark

3. That the apostles are not justly chargeable with
ıch wickedness.

There is not only an entire lack of any evidence that
ıey were capable of such iniquity, but there is much
ɔsitive proof that they sustained a far different char-
:ter. The purity of their lives, the integrity, upright-
ess and propriety of their moral deportment, I have
ɔt heard questioned; and so far as the voice of history
ın be heard in regard to their conduct as men and as
itizens, there is much to admire and nought to con-
emn. They lived peaceably with all men, and even
ound themselves to injure no man's person or property.
'hey constantly exercised a kind and forgiving spirit,
nd even prayed for the welfare of their most bitter
nemies. That such men as these should combine and
ıll a downright falsehood, and persist in it even to
eath, merely for the purpose of building up the cause
f a man that they knew to be an impostor, is not cred-
ıle, and I contend that common justice should hold
ıem guiltless of such a charge until it is proved against
ıem.

The course they pursued in the propagation of this
ɔctrine of the resurrection, evinces any thing else,
ıther than craft or a desire to deceive. They sought
ɔ concealment and shunned no investigation. They
ıught boldly in the synagogues, and in all their con-

duct there is none of that cunning management and art, which always characterizes those who are engaged in an attempt to deceive. There was no covert or underhanded manoeuvering to enlist in their favour the arm of state, or the names of the powerful and honourable of the earth, nor any adroit management to avoid coming in contact with their enemies. They had no secret conclaves, or nocturnal consultations for laying plans of deception, but with the utmost simplicity and apparent honesty, they preached the resurrection of the dead. They confronted their adversaries to the face and with all boldness declared that Christ was risen, in all places whithersoever they went. They *commenced* at Jerusalem, the very place where Christ was crucified, and where the cheat, if it had been one, would have been discovered. Does this look like the conduct of men who have devised a fable and are endeavouring to deceive? Surely not. If their account of the resurrection was an invention or a fabrication, they knowing it to be such, would have been urged by policy, and a regard for safety, to go into some remote part of the country, and preach it until they had secured converts enough to strengthen their hands in the combat with their enemies. Of all places in the world Jerusalem promised the least, and was for them the most forbidding and dangerous. There Christ had been known. There he had been put to death as a malefactor, and there was the cross upon which he hung, and the sepulchre in which he was buried. There too were the enemies that nailed him to the cross, still ready to butcher any one, who plead in his behalf, and there were the soldiers, that guarded his tomb. If the account of the resurrection was false, I can conceive of no more consummate folly, than for the disciples to

ence its relation in that place. Yet *there* it was
ney began. Yes, in this very Jerusalem, the
: of action, the citadel of all opposition, they
enced to preach Jesus and the resurrection. Does
ok like the work of deceivers? Or is this the
r in which impostors usually proceed? No. It
he impress of honesty, and no man can account
ir mode of procedure in this case, but upon the
ition, that they believed what they said. And
believed it, then it was true, for deception in
se, was altogether out of the question.

The success that attended their testimony, is evi-
that it was true.

as but a short time after the crucifixion, that thou-
could be found in Jerusalem who were believers
resurrection. Had this been some *speculative*
ne, it would not be difficult to see, how the people
be induced to believe, however so extravagant
ard. But this was not the case. It was a ques-
lating to a simple matter of fact, which was said
e occurred forty days before, in their very midst.
implest among them had every means of knowing
er it was true or false. Is it possible, that three
nd people in the city of Jerusalem, could have
made to believe, that a man who was crucified only
ays before, had risen from the dead, when it was
t but an idle tale? Do you suppose that twelve
ould have conspired and devised a story that the
ous Strang, who was executed in this city, had
rom the dead, and circulated it with success in
ace? Could they have come in here immediate-
r his execution, and convinced three thousand
citizens, that he was alive, when the fact was,
is remains were among us? Such a case is not

supposable, and if such a thing had been attempte *this* would have been the last place for making peopl believe the story. Yet in Jerusalem the people had a necessary means for knowing whether the account c the resurrection were true or false. But *there* the wo grew, and believers multiplied. Yes, even *there*, whe forty days before the streets resounded with the cr crucify him! crucify him! did the disciples preach, ar the people believe. There, under the brow of Calvar where Christ had bled and died, with the sepulchre c Joseph before them, and the spear of the soldier y dripping with his blood, they openly declared that l had risen from the dead, and three thousand were co vinced in one day! Allow me to ask, how will yc account for these things, but upon the supposition th they uttered truth which could not be gainsayed The prejudices of the people were strong and inveterа against them; and if Christ was an imposter, and h resurrection a fable, why did they not discover ar expose the cheat? There was the cross, the tomb, tl soldiers and the people who had known him? Wl did they not go to the tomb and show the multitud that he had not risen? Where was Judas the traite that he did not come forward and expose the plo Alas! he confessed, that he had betrayed innoce blood, and in despair took his life.

5. I remark, that there were no sufficient inducemer for the disciples to propagate this story, if they had n known it to be true.

It could not have been an expectation of world honour, or emolument, that induced them to prea Christ or the resurrection; for all these consideratio were in the opposite scale. They had seen the spi of deep animosity, and bloody persecution at work

the hearts of their countrymen. They knew that prejudice was inveterate against Christ and his religion, and they had nothing to expect but that the same spirit of hatred which nailed him to the cross would stir up the people against them; and no human foresight could promise them more than the ignominious death of their master. They knew, that the power, and wisdom, and wealth, and honour of the world were all arrayed in one solid phalanx against them, and they had every possible reason to expect, that buffetings, and revilings, bonds and imprisonment, persecution and death, would be their portion. If these things were sufficiently desirable to call out their exertions, then was there a motive for them to persevere. Did they wish for honour? They might have gained it by renouncing the Nazarene and exposing the plans of deception that were laid? Did they wish for ease? They might have had it in the profession of the popular religion of the day. Did they thirst for gold? Behold the bribe was already in the hand of the crafty enemy. Here were opportunities for advancing their own personal interest, incomparably greater than any thing they could expect to gain in the course they pursued. Even if we allow that they hoped for honour or profit in the outset, they must have been dull indeed, if one short year had not taught them how vain and futile were all such expectations. How happens it then, that they did not abandon the project when these hopes were cut off? How happens it, that they continued with their last dying breath to declare the truth of the resurrection from the dead? They met persecution in its worst forms, in consequence of what they asserted, and yet not one of them betrayed the least imaginable disposition to retract. I know that every system can boast of its martyrs, but they were martyrs in a differ-

ent sense from the apostles. I can easily imagine how a man, believing in any creed, however absurd, can cherish it so deeply, as to lay down his life in its defence. But the apostles were not martyrs to *opinion* merely. It was a question of facts. They did not proclaim the resurrection of Christ as an opinion or theory of theirs. They said they knew it. They saw and conversed with him, and even handled and *knew* it was him. They were not deceived, and if the story was false it was a fabrication of their own. I have no doubt that men could suffer as much as these men suffered, in defence of an honest opinion, but it is not in human nature to subject one's self to such sufferings for the purpose of testifying to a falsehood. They left all, became outcasts from society, endured sufferings intense as nature could bear, and finally laid down their lives in the midst of extreme tortures, without betraying any disposition to retract—and all this for what? Why, if it was not so; for the simple pleasure of repeating a barefaced and deliberate falsehood! I grant that martyrdom is not proof of the truth of any system, but it is proof of the sincerity of its professor, and in this case, if there was one particle of sincerity in the disciples their testimony was true; for they could not be *honestly* deceived. I contend if there was ever a set of men on earth who gave evidence of sincerity and honesty, these were the men, and if they were honest the resurrection of Christ is true.

There is yet one more circumstance to be noticed, and I shall leave this part of my subject. I allude to the fact, that notwithstanding the resurrection of Christ constitutes the basis of the Christian religion, and was uniformly insisted upon by the apostles as the great miracle with which this religion must stand or fall, yet

no efforts were made by the enemies of Christ to disprove it, correspondent to its vast importance. To have shown that the resurrection of Christ was a fraud, would have been to explode Christianity. This St. Paul frankly acknowledged: "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." That is, if the resurrection of Christ is untrue, the Christian religion is untrue likewise, and preaching and faith equally preposterous and vain. Why then, I ask, did not the early enemies of Christianity put forth their exertions to disprove this alleged miracle and fact? Was not the Jewish Sanhedrim, through whose influence Jesus was crucified, very nearly concerned in this work? Had it not every motive which conscience, a love of public respect, and a hope for the approbation of God could minister, to engage heart and hand in this important labour? Could it have proved that Jesus had not been raised from the dead,—that his body had been stolen from the sepulchre notwithstanding the Roman guard, the great stone and the seal—it would have demonstrated him to have been an imposter, his death the just punishment of his villany, and the Sanhedrim itself justified by God and man in procuring that death. And yet that Sanhedrim was accused by the apostles to its very face, of having crucified and slain Jesus, "the Just One," "the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead." Why, I ask again, was not this accusation repelled and disproved—why but that the Sanhedrim, whether it believed in the resurrection or not, was fully conscious that it could not be disproved, and that every effort to that end would only result in establishing the fact so prejudicial to their interests and schemes? Nothing but this conviction on the minds of the opposing Jews can account

for their conduct. Then was the time to show, if it could be shown, that the resurrection of Jesus was a fraud. And it is utterly incredible that the only opportunity for accomplishing this work, so important to those immediately concerned, would have been suffered to pass unimproved. That it did pass unimproved is notorious, and hence I am constrained to believe that the truth of the resurrection of Jesus could not be successfully controverted, even in the very day and very place where that event transpired: if not then and there, the task under vastly less favourable circumstances is for ever hopeless. Was it indeed reserved for the wise men of this day to detect a fraud which eluded the vigilance of the most eagle-eyed enemies on the spot, and whose interest it was to expose the deception in order to shield themselves? But here I pause. I say nothing of the five hundred witnesses who were alive in Paul's day to bear testimony that they saw Christ after his resurrection with their own eyes, and knew he had risen. You have in the first place a strong probability in favour of the fact itself, drawn from the acknowledged attributes of God, and the known principles of his government, all bearing in favour of such an exhibition of his goodness. And then, you have the testimony of a body of men who uniformly asserted the fact of the resurrection as a matter of positive knowledge with them, and that too, with no earthly prospect, but that persecution and death would be the consequence. In addition to this, you have the spread of the sentiment in the very city where the event is said to have occurred, and the virtual concessions of enemies who lived near the time; besides the rise of Christianity and the observance of the first day of the week in commemoration of the event, all proving this

one point. I feel justified in saying, that it is an amount of evidence, which in any other case, would be deemed absolutely irresistible, such indeed as cannot be adduced in favour of any other event in all antiquity.

The question now arises, what evidence does the resurrection of Christ afford of the resurrection of others? I answer, it proves the divinity of his mission, and establishes the heavenly origin of his doctrine. He taught the resurrection from the dead, and foretold that he would descend into the grave, and rise as an earnest of that immortal inheritance, which is reserved for the children of men. If I have shown that he did indeed rise according to his word, then it follows that he was no impostor, and that his teachings may be confidently believed, as emenating from that God who has power to raise from the dead.

But the argument of the apostle is still more explicit. He points to Adam on the one hand, and to Christ on the other as respectively as the representatives of the human race, and contends that, "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Therefore, the resurrection of Christ is as clear proof, that all men will rise from the dead, as is the death of Adam, that all men will die. Suppose we were called to prove that all must die. We should prove it by the force of example. We should point to Adam, the first man, as a specimen or example of human nature, and from the fact that he died, we should draw the conclusion that all his posterity must die also. The same kind of reasoning will apply to the case in hand. Do you ask for proof that man shall rise from the dead? I give you an example. I point you to Christ as a specimen of that high and exalted destiny to which man is appointed. He is our head, and as he rose, so shall we

rise also. In the first Adam you see human nature in its weakness, falling before the king of terrors; in the second Adam who is Christ, you see humanity in its power, by the strength of the Lord conquering even death itself. Permit me then, to point you to him as the "corner-stone, tried and precious," which God has laid in Zion as the foundation of your hopes, for all the good things of life, and for the unborn glories of a happy immortality. Around his glorious head cluster all my expectations, and to him alone can I direct your attention, as a risen and exalted Redeemer, who is able to give you the victory over death and all its terrors. He will give you good hope and everlasting consolation through faith, and "raise you to life and to glory at last."

Before I close this part of my subject, I beg leave to offer one remark for those who oppose the doctrine of the resurrection. You look around you and know, that faith in this doctrine makes some happy. You see the unfortunate cheered by it hopes, the aged and infirm on the verge of the grave supported by its spirit, and the dying pillow rendered soft and joyful by its power. I beseech you then in the name of mercy, take not this staff from the hand of the tottering veteran, unless you can give him a better. Destroy not this last refuge of the unfortunate, till you are prepared to offer a safer retreat. Dash not this last cup of consolation from the quivering lips of the dying, unless you are prepared to give a cordial more happifying. If you can give us any thing that will make us more happy in life or resigned in our death, we will talk of an exchange. But until you are prepared to do this, I entreat you spare our hopes, and let us drink freely and copiously of the river of the water of life.

DISCOURSE XI.

THE EXCELLENCY OF THE GOSPEL.

Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the nowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. PHILIPPIANS iii. 8.

THIS discourse will be devoted to a consideration of he surpassing excellency of the gospel of Christ. The postle counted the learning and wealth of the world ut foolishness and dross, when brought into compari-on with the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord; and t is the object of this discourse to show that he placed o more than its true and proper value upon the gospel. take the broad ground that the Christianity is far su-erior to any system of religion or irreligion ever in-ented or propagated by the wisdom of this world. The ility of religion consists in its power to make men rtuous and happy, and that religion is the best which motes these objects in the highest degree. The e of the gospel is conspicuously exhibited in the that its moral precepts and doctrinal teachings, monize in securing the highest happiness and most ted virtue of the human race. I propose in this urse to consider

The superior excellency of the moral precepts of t.

re it should be remarked that the reader of the Testament will not find therein, what would be a regularly-digested and systematic code of moral

laws. The author of our religion seems to have been perfectly well aware of the fact, that the great secret of making men virtuous, consists, not in laying before them rules and commands for the regulation of the *hands*, but in inculcating those immortal principles of truth which will purify the *heart* and regulate the spring of action. I must be allowed to illustrate this remark, for I deem it one of some importance. Here is a man that hates his neighbour. He is puffed up with pride and looks down with disdain upon his fellow and treats him with perfect contempt. Now it is of little use to command that man to love his neighbour and treat him kindly unless you accompany that command with some instructions which are able to purge out the old leaven of hatred. But tell the man and stamp on his mind the full conviction that his neighbour is his brother, a child of the same God, and an heir of the same inheritance with himself, and then he will begin to "see through mercy's melting eye, a brother in a foe;" and by that simple intelligence communicated to his understanding, you accomplish more than could be done by a code of laws, long as the Koran, even though they were sanctioned by all the thunders of mount Sinai. You have touched the *heart*, and having purified the fountain, the streams will of course be pure. This I apprehend is the true reason why the teachings of the gospel partake so much of a doctrinal character, and why its specific directions for the conduct are so few. Its author knew that *one* principle of truth deeply fixed in the mind, would accomplish more than a thousand commands, however wise or just. Hence his *commands* are few; his rules for the regulation of the conduct *general*, and always accompanied with the doctrinal principle upon which they were founded. He was not

satisfied when he had commanded his followers to love their enemies, but he went on and gave them along with the command a doctrine, which if they believed, would work in them obedience to that precept. He told them that in so doing, they would imitate the perfections of that blessed God, who "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and the unjust." Here was developed a principle of truth without which the command would have been powerless. On this account the moral code of the gospel is brief, and its precepts wide in their application, and general in their character. Forgiveness, forbearance, mercy, compassion, justice, temperance, chastity and fidelity, are the most important duties embraced and enjoined in the Saviour's rules of life. Upon these precepts I remark, that they exhibit a knowledge of man's moral nature, and are adapted to it with a precision that can be found in no other code of morals under heaven. In a former discourse I endeavoured to show that man's moral nature had its laws upon the healthful operation of which his happiness depended. Obedience to these laws is bliss, and disobedience is misery. There is a certain course of conduct which so perfectly accords with these laws that in pursuing it there is all joy and peace. There is another course, which is so much in opposition to them that a contrary effect is the result of its pursuit. Now the moral teachings of Christ draw the dividing line between these two courses of conduct with such unerring precision, that while on the one hand happiness is the invariable result of an observance of his precepts; on the other, there is not *one* of them that can be violated without entailing misery upon the transgressor. I fearlessly challenge the spirit of rankest infidelity to point out one of the precepts of Christ,

the observance of which will not increase human happiness; or one that can be violated without detracting from the sum of our enjoyment. If this principle is correct, then you can see the wisdom of Christ shining out from his moral code, and you can draw hence a powerful argument in favour of the divinity of his mission. Before the introduction of Christianity, the earth had rolled upon her axis four thousand years, and yet man with all his wisdom and with all the lessons of experience before him, did not know enough of himself and his own nature to refuse the evil and choose the good. Science and philosophy had laboured in vain for a code of morals which should so accord with the constitution of man, that obedience should give happiness and disobedience make miserable. But he that made the moral man knew how to fit him with a garment. He spoke and it was done, and in Christ Jesus the Lord, a code of morals is presented, so nicely fitted to man, that in all ages and in all countries, obedience is bliss, and in no age and no country can the least of all its commands be disregarded without a loss of happiness. I know there were moralists in the world before the days of Christ; and some would pretend to compare the moral teachings of the ancient heathen philosophers with those of Christ, and even claim equality if not superiority for the former. On this account it becomes necessary for me to examine some of these systems of morality, and compare them with Christianity. Among the most renowned of the ancient philosophers are Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, Lycurgus, Seneca and Cicero. I deem it proper to say, in the outset, that I respect the names of these renowned sages of antiquity. I grant that they shone as lights in the darkness of the age in which they lived, and served their day and generation

well. I admit further, that they accomplished as much in an effort to give man a perfect system of morality, as the unaided wisdom of this world ever accomplished. I would not pluck one laurel from that crown of honour which an admiring world has awarded to these stars in the intellectual firmament. The spirit of infidelity, however, has dragged them from the peace of their graves, and brought them into the field against Christ, and on this account it becomes necessary for me to examine their teachings, a work which otherwise might have been avoided. The following are among the most prominent defects in their moral systems.

Plato taught, that parents might lawfully sacrifice their children. Socrates contended that a lie was in many instances preferable to the truth. Aristotle maintained with Plato, the lawfulness and expediency of sacrificing children in certain cases. Lycurgus encouraged theft, by an express law for that purpose, and Seneca and Cicero both plead for self-murder, and carried about with them implements of death for that purpose. Of them all it may be said in general terms, that they allowed and even encouraged, some of them by example as well as precept, an unlimited gratification of the sensual appetites, and an indulgence of unbridled lust. Cicero expressly admits that they were never able to reform the lives or correct the moral conduct either of themselves or their followers. Lucian pronounces them a body of adulterers. Plutarch says, that even Plato and Socrates were as inconsistent and intemperate as any slave; and that Aristotle was a fop and a destroyer of female innocence. Quintilian asserts that the philosophers of his time concealed the most vicious lives under an austere look and a singular dress. (See Horne's Introduction, vol. i., chap. 1.) And

these are the immortal worthies for whose sakes you would have us abjure Christ! These are the men, and these the examples and precepts which you claim as superior to the heavenly doctrines and Godlike examples of Christ Jesus our Lord! You can do as you like, but for me I say, I cannot exchange the wisdom of Jesus for folly like this.

If we advert to the present state of the pagan world and compare the morality of the people, either in its theory or practice, with that of Christ, we shall find yet more abundant proof of the truth of our position. Go across the mighty waters and visit those nations of the earth, where no ray of light from the gospel of God has ever found its way through the "darkness visible" that broods over the people. Is there any system of religion or code of morals to be found there which can claim a comparison with the gospel? Alas! the picture is dark, and there is scarcely a redeeming ray to relieve its sombre hues. In some parts cannibalism prevails, and in almost all human life is sacrificed at the will of a tyrant. Females are slaves, and treated little better than beasts. Polygamy and the divorce of the wife at the will of the husband are almost universal. Habitual disregard of truth, tyranny in its worst forms, theft, deceit, falsehood, perjury, treachery, hatred, revenge, cruelty and murder, prevail to an alarming extent. It is worthy of special remark, that these enormities are not practised in opposition to their religion, nor do they seek the remedy in that religion. On the contrary, they are in many instances pronounced innocent and even praiseworthy by their ideas of moral obligation. Nay worse than this: there are other and more foul abominations which are not merely left unrestrained by any of the prevailing systems of religion, but absolutely and

positively enjoined as sacred duties. There widows burn upon the funeral pyre of their husbands. There children bleed and die upon the altars of their gods. There deluded man casts his body down to be crushed by the wheels of the car of Juggernaut, or throws himself beneath the waves of the Ganges, a self-devoted victim to his religion. There modes of torture and rites of privation, various as a distorted fancy can suggest, and terrible and severe as nature can endure, are practised to placate the wrath or propitiate the favour of their imaginary divinities. As for the virtues of charity, kindness, forgiveness, mercy and compassion, or the laws that enjoin them, where are they? The truth answers that they are not. They enter not into any system of religion, and are neither enjoined or practised as moral virtues. Where are their provisions for the support of the poor and needy? Where are their hospitals for the sick, asylums for the orphan, and refuges for the unfortunate? Where are their exertions for ameliorating the condition of suffering humanity, instructing the ignorant, and reclaiming the vicious and the profligate? They are not in pagan lands, and in no place under heaven can you find them but where they have been planted by the mild and benevolent spirit of the gospel. Look over the map of the world, and talk as much as you will of the wickedness of Christians, the astounding fact stares you in the face, that the boundary of Christianity is also the line of demarcation, broad and deep, between civilization and all its blessings, and barbarism with all its curses. On the one side, those practices that adorn and exalt humanity are nurtured and cherished; and on the other, the vices that degrade and debase man to a level with the beast grow in rank luxuriance. In this view of the subject,

we find proof of the superior moral power and efficacy of the gospel.

But I might perhaps have spared myself this labour It is acknowledged by sceptics that Christianity is the best RELIGION in the world. But they have a system of philosophy which they affect to think far superior I will therefore meet them here, and search the writing of modern sceptics to see whether their moral teaching are better than those of Christ.

Lord Herbert, the first of modern deists, asserts tha the indulgence of lust and anger is no more to be blame than the thirst occasioned by a dropsy, or the drowsi ness produced by a lethargy. Mr. Hobbes, who wa contemporary in part with Herbert, contends that civi law is the only foundation of right and wrong—that th sovereign is not bound by obligations of truth and jus tice, and can do no wrong to his subjects, and that ev ery man has a right to all things, and may lawfully ge them if he can. Lord Bolinbroke taught that the chie end of man is to gratify the appetites and inclination of the flesh—modesty is inspired by prejudice—polyg amy a part of the religion of nature, and there is n wrong but in the highest lewdness. Mr. Hume, wh wrote in the latter part of the eighteenth century, con tends that self-denial and humility are not virtues, bu useless and mischievous—that adultery *must* be prac tised if we would secure all the advantages of life, an if it were generally practised it would cease to be scan dalous, and come to be thought no crime at all. Vol taire and Helvetius both contend that it is right an proper to indulge an unlimited gratification of the sen sual appetites, and the latter, that gallantry (a wor which he uses as synonymous with adultery) shoul not be considered a vice in a moral sense. Rousseau

asserts that all a man feels to be right is right. (See Horne's Introduction vol. i., chap. 1, art. 2.) Such are some of the moral teachings of modern sceptics, "nothing extenuated, nor aught set down in malice." I say nothing of the community theory of Miss Frances Wright and her followers, which would dissolve the tie that binds the husband and the wife, and make the wide world a huge sink of iniquity. I pass this and remark, that you may take the moral teachings of the most eminent and renowned of the deistical school, reduce them to universal practice and the holiest institutions of civilized society would crumble to the dust. The domestic fireside would no longer remain the hallowed sanctuary of conjugal fidelity, and unbridled reckless and headlong passion would pour its floods of moral pollution over the world. I do not say that every deist is an immoral man. I am happy in knowing that such is not the fact. But this I say, if they are virtuous, if they discharge with fidelity their duty as husbands and parents, if they are even faithful in their conjugal relations, it is not on account of the influence of their principles, for these as laid down by their most approved writers impose no such obligation upon them. The moral precepts of Christianity which require honesty in all things, a sacred regard to the rights of others in all cases, faithfulness in husbands and wives, kindness in parents, filial obedience in children, forgiveness to our enemies, charity to the distressed, and ardent love to all our fellows, extending even to our enemies —these precepts are as much above any code of morals ever invented by ancient heathen or modern sceptic, as the heavens are above the earth. Thus much I have thought proper to say upon the moral precepts of the gospel, but these are not its chief glory. The secret

of its vast moral energy is not to be found in its few and general rules of action, but in the omnipotent power of its doctrines which mould and form the whole man, and control all his conduct. This will bring me to consider

II. The superior excellency of the Christian doctrine.

There is no sentiment more true than that of the apostle: "As a man thinketh, so is he." If a man thinks wrong, he will most certainly feel and act wrong. The origin, relations and destiny of man are subjects of vast and incalculable moment; and I much doubt if the moral power of men's views upon these subjects are generally understood or appreciated. If a man views himself as an inconsiderable atom, which came into existence by chance, and which is floating at random upon a fortuitous concourse of events, without law or government, it cannot reasonably be expected of him, that he will raise himself to a greater elevation in the scale of being than that which he imagines himself to occupy. If a man thinks he is a child of the devil, he will be likely to serve his father. If a man believes that he is related only to the beasts that perish, and is destined only to feed the worm, it may reasonably be calculated that his earthly passions will reign over all his conduct. In like manner, if a man supposes, as many of the heathens, and some who profess to be Christians do, that his end is to dwell in the torments and blasphemies of hell, he will be quite likely to be fitting himself for that inheritance which he expects to possess. The different views that men entertain upon this subject, make them in their own estimation, almost entirely different creatures; and they will consequently give rise to entirely different courses of conduct. The child of a beggar who is related only to the poor, and

whose lot of life is to beg, cannot be expected either to feel or act like the son of a king, related to princes and born to inherit a throne. Neither can an orphan feel or act like a child who is surrounded with the care and the blessings of a father. Now let us look at Christianity in this light, and mark its power to give a direction to the current of feeling, and a tone to the moral conduct. It teaches that we all came from the forming hand of a God who is possessed of every possibly great and glorious attribute and perfection; that we are related to men, to angels; nay, that God himself has called us children, and bids us call him *Father*, and that we are all heirs together of an immortal and incorruptible inheritance that fadeth not away, reserved for us in heaven. When such a doctrine as this is proclaimed and believed, the same man who had heretofore stood in his own estimation upon a level with the beasts that perish, now looks upon himself in a new light, almost indeed as another being, and the new relations that he discovers point him to new and different courses of conduct. He now sees that he is a child of God, and this discovery urges him to act nobly, as becomes his parentage. He now sees that he is related to higher natures, even to the greatest and the best of beings, and he is thus incited to act up to the dignity of his nature. He discovers that he is an heir of bliss, purity and immortality, and this faith makes him feel the necessity and propriety of training himself for the skies. This is the gospel faith, and it is easy to perceive that its effect must be powerful upon the conduct. The man who embraces it in sincerity and in truth, is raised to the full dignity of his nature. He is no longer a beast, acting like a beast. He feels the divinity stirring within, and the dormant energies of his mind are

aroused to action. He takes his stand upon an eminence above the turmoils of the earth. He looks down upon the vicious propensities of the flesh, as completely under his control, and in the integrity of his heart, he is able to say to every unhallowed passion, as the Saviour said to his offending disciple, "Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me."

Thus the influence of the doctrinal teachings of Christianity is strong and powerful to check the headlong passions, and make men truly virtuous and substantially good. Besides all this, Christianity teaches that the all-seeing eye of the omniscient God is upon us; that he takes cognizance of our ways, and will reward our virtues and punish our vices. It tells us also that he is kind and benevolent, even to the unthankful and ungodly, and that men are all brethren. Inasmuch therefore as man can be deterred from vice by the fear of punishment, excited to virtue by hope of reward, operated upon by the powerful example of kindness presented in the God he adores, or induced to love his fellow-creatures from the consideration of fraternal relationship, in all these respects Christianity in its theory must of necessity exert a powerful and salutary influence in forming the heart to love and good will.

But I leave this view of the matter, and I appeal to one general principle, which will test the moral influence of the doctrines of Christ. I never yet heard it disputed that the gospel is more happifying in its influence than any other system in the world. I have conversed with many deists, yea, and with some atheists, and yet I never found among them a candid man, who would not freely admit that he should be happier if he believed the doctrines of Christ, than he is in the embrace of his sceptical opinions. If he could

believe in the constant, kind and tender care of the Christian's God, and especially in the glorious resurrection to life and immortality, it would fill his soul with unutterable joy. If this is the fact, these men ought to know that they are inflicting a wound upon the cause of morality in every endeavour to destroy this faith. I hold it as a truth, that just in proportion as you make a man happy, in that exact ratio you make him kind, tenderhearted, and readily disposed to every good word and work. On the other hand, in proportion as you make him miserable, you sour his temper, sharpen his passions and make him unkind, hard-hearted and vicious. You may see an illustration of this truth every day, in your families. I ask, when is there most of kindness peace and good will in the domestic circle? I answer for you. It is when your children are the happiest. When they are all contented and naught disturbs or troubles them, then they are kind obedient and disposed to do good. But when they are discontented, and some circumstance to them untoward, has disturbed their plans, or crossed their hopes, the invariable consequence is, that they are disposed to evil. It is so with us all. When we are contented with our lot, and happy within ourselves, then the heart is tender and kind; but when corroding cares perplex us, and we are dissatisfied with ourselves and those around us, then we partake of the spirit of wickedness and our feet are swift to do evil. Do you imagine that any man ever committed a crime when he was happy? I am persuaded that such an instance never occurred. It is only when men are restless and uneasy, that they plunge into iniquity. All love to be happy, and if they have not in themselves those principles that can fill up the measure of their joy, they will too often seek it in licentiousness and

sin. Give a man bread enough and he will not steal bread. Give him money enough and he will not steal gold. Satisfy the drunkard's thirst and he will not drain the intoxicating bowl. Give a man the bread and the water of life, and he will go no more after the husks of iniquity, nor drink again at the stagnant pool of transgression. Satisfy the desires of a man and make him happy with the pure principles of the gospel of Christ Jesus our Lord, and he will have no cause to seek for happiness in iniquitous practices. That I am correct in this principle you may see from a moment's reflection. Ask the drunkard who goes to his midnight carousal, why he first went to the fountain of death? and he will tell you, if he tells the truth, that he was discontented and unhappy, and sought for pleasure there. Ask the man who has laid his hand unlawfully upon his neighbour's goods, and who now groans in a prison, what caused him to commit the crime? and he will tell you the same story. Ask the vile debauchee why he entered upon his unholy course at first? and he will tell you that a restless unhappy spirit impelled him onward to seek for enjoyment in scenes of riot and debauchery. Had these men possessed in their own minds, a source of happiness, upon which they could have drawn, the drunkard, who now lives a bloated curse to himself and others, would have been a sober man—the thief honest; and the diseased sinner a virtuous husband and a good citizen. Just in proportion therefore as Christianity can make men happy, it can exert a salutary moral influence; and if its doctrines are more happifying than the system of the deist, as he allows, then it must have a greater and more salutary moral influence. The man who is made happy by faith in the Son of God, is not easily drawn aside from

the path of virtue. The bread of wickedness has no power to tempt, for he has food more desirable. The waters of iniquity are not sweet to him, for the wine of the kingdom is better. The siren song of the tempter, passes by like the idle wind, for he has music within more captivating than the bewitching notes of the deceiver. But the restless and unhappy man, whose mind is destitute of that enjoyment which flows from the gospel of Christ, is easily drawn aside, and "led captive by Satan at his will." In all countries, it is observable, that where the mild and equitable spirit of their civil institutions, renders the condition of the people comfortable and happy, there is least of crime. But where tyranny grinds the people to powder, and wretchedness and misery reign, there they plunge into the very lowest depths of iniquity. War's trumpet is sounded and the fields are strewed with the dead. The impatient, restless and unhappy spirit of a king and his courtiers was the cause. Whole cities and countries are laid in ruin, and the tyrant's scourge scatters devastation and death over the fairest portions of the earth. The movers of the gory engine were restless and miserable wretches. These things admonish us to be up and doing, and there comes a voice from the sepulchres of ruined thousands warning us, if we wish to check the progress of crime, to labour with zeal to instil into the minds of the children of men those principles and hopes, that shall lead them to rejoice and be glad all their days. It was this view of the subject no doubt, that induced the Saviour and his early disciples to exert all their powers to hush every troubled emotion to peaceful rest, and inspire the people with an abiding and steadfast confidence in God, as a being in whose hands they might safely trust their immortal interests,

without fear of danger or disappointment. To this end the gospel, in all its promises and hopes is directly and powerfully tending. That gospel can give peace when all else fades away. It can light up a smile upon the countenance of the disconsolate widow and her weeping children. Its calm and heavenly voice can penetrate the dark dungeon of despair and cause the song of deliverance to break forth from the prisoners in the pit. It can comfort the poor, and pour the spirit of peace and contentment into the hearts of the miserable sons and daughters of sorrow and adversity. Like a holy angel of light it stands upon the mountains of Zion, and with the one hand beckons us to partake of God's bounties on earth, and with the other points us to the hopes of heaven. Thus it curbs the headstrong passions, and hushes every hurtful emotion that might lead to crimes of a scarlet die. Oh! then, let the angel of the everlasting covenant breathe the soft spirit of the gospel into the valley of dry bones and they shall live. Let the voice of Jesus sweetly whisper peace to the anxious soul, and proclaim the joyous tidings of immortal life, and the desert shall blossom as the rose, and virtue, benevolence and love shall rise and shine forth clear as the moon walking in the glory of her brightness through the vault of heaven. I have thus attempted feebly to exhibit before you the surpassing "excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."

I cannot close this subject without noting the remarkable fact, that Christianity is the *only* system of religion on earth, whose sole object it is, to operate upon the minds and hearts of the human race, and make them better and happier. In this it differs radically from all other systems, and is marked as completely distinct from all religions that originate in the

wisdom of the world. All others are designed to operate upon God, and make him gracious, where otherwise he would be an enemy. Go over the world and examine all the various systems that men have invented. Mark the efforts of their votaries, their costly sacrifices, and ostentatious ceremonies. Behold volumns of incense rising, and hecatombs of oxen bleeding upon their altars. Mark the zeal of their professors, their untiring exertions and painful rites of privation; and let me ask what is the cause of these? It is simply this; the hope of changing the counsels of God and inducing him to be gracious to those whom he designs to curse. One object pervades the whole, and one spring puts the vast machinery in motion. All these systems employ the feeble efforts of man to operate upon the purposes of God. But it was not so with Christ. He sought to reconcile *man* to his God, and for this purpose he brought all the glories of the divine character, and the splendours of heaven and immortality to bear upon the hearts of the children of men, to mould them into the moral image of their Father and their God. It is this circumstance which renders the gospel emphatically a religion useful and precious for man; for man universally as well as for the few. God is infinitely above being benefited by our services, or changed by our sins or virtues, but *man* needs the good influences of the spirit of truth to guide him in the way of virtue and peace. For this purpose Christianity is designed and to this end it is useful and necessary, wherever there is a child of Adam wandering from the path of righteousness.

It is hardly necessary for me to remark, that the glorious prospect for the future, which Christianity presents to the believer, should render it right precious to

our souls, and induce us to hold it as the richest boon that a merciful Father has sent down from heaven. The hope of a glorious resurrection to immortality, shines beautifully in contrast with the drear prospect of dark annihilation, presented in the creed of the sceptic. It need cost you but a moment's reflection to decide which is most valuable. Let me say in conclusion, that however lightly we may regard this knowledge of Christ Jesus now, the time is coming when we shall all need its sustaining and supporting power. To each and every one of us, the day of death will sooner or later arrive. In that solemn hour, when the earth with all its endearments is receding from our view, and the soul floats upon the confines of another world, we shall need the hopes and the good consolations of the gospel. May I not ask, what good will all our scepticism do us in that solemn moment? Will it pluck one thorn from the pillow of death, or give one spark of comfort in the last sad parting scene? Nay. The gospel alone can do this, and well might the apostle say, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord"

DISCOURSE XII.

›BJECTIONS TO CHRISTIANITY CONSIDERED.

For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not ;ether. MARK xiv. 56.

I PURPOSE in this discourse to notice some of the more ›mmon and popular objections against the Christian ligion. It cannot of course be expected that I shall :amine every frivolous objection that the spirit of scep- :ism may have urged. This would require a volume stead of a sermon. I intimated in the commence- ent, that these discourses were designed for the un- ttered Christian rather than for the learned student ' theology. I shall therefore in this department exam- e a few sceptical arguments of a general character, ıch as are often in the mouths of unbelievers, and ·ged with some force and effect. Among these I name I. The conduct of professors in different ages of the hristian era.

The pages of history are stained with blood. Those ho have claimed to be followers of Christ have per- :cuted one another with cruelty and barbarity. The umpet of war has been heard, and hostile armies have ıet in the field of battle, and have fought in the name, ıd professedly under the sanction of Christ. Chains ıve clanked upon the limbs of the prisoner, and the arkness of night has often been illuminated with the res of persecution, kindled to burn the bodies of here- cs. An inquisition has been established, thousands on

thousands have been tortured upon the rack, and ing nuity has been exerted to the utmost in devising mea to extract a deeper groan, a more bitter pang from t sufferer. All this is laid to the charge of Christiani and the objector is ready to say that he wants nothi to do with a system that has produced such evils.

I can but remark that the use made of this objecti by sceptics, is particularly unfair and uncandid. should be glad to know if it is any new thing under t sun for men to go to war with one another, and destr the lives of their fellows; and if all the world has be at peace save that portion of it which is called Chr tian? From the frequency with which this objecti is pressed into the service of infidelity, and the lame ations that are poured out over the wars and fightin that have occurred under the banner of the cross, o would be apt to suppose that all would have been u versal peace and harmony, had it not been for the Chr tian religion; and that this alone has been the cau of all the blood that has stained the earth. But h stands the fact in this case? Were there no wars a commotions in the world before the introduction of t gospel? And since that time has man nowhere lift a hand against his brother, save in Christian countrie Have all the nations of the earth who know not G or the gospel of his son, been at peace? Have the been no animosities, wars and fightings among tho who have not heard of the name of Christ? You kn the answer which must be given to these questions, a *that* answer should be pondered well before you ve positively assert that the Christian religion has eit fanned the flame of war, or added to the amount bloodshed, that would have existed had it not been i troduced or propagated. The truth is, that contenti

and war were in the world before the introduction of the gospel, and from the earliest period of history, man has been the enemy of man, and from the days of Christ to the present time, those nations who know not his name have not ceased to worry and devour each other. Who then can affirm that Christianity has given birth to a spirit of contention, or nurtured that spirit, when already in existence? Who can adduce one shadow of evidence that there would have been more of peace on earth and good will among men, had it not been for the gospel? I know there have been quarrels and contentions among those that profess to be Christians. I know also that there have been wars and rumours of wars, and persecutions and fightings among those that never heard of Jesus or his religion. But what does all this prove? It just proves that man is man, and that he too frequently follows his headlong passions and raises a murderous arm against his brother. But there is one circumstance which ought not to be passed over. I allude to the fact that the spirit of Christianity has done much towards softening down the rigours and cruelties of war. War is at best, I confess, a cruel business, but it should be known, that there are gleamings of mercy, and principles of humanity, now to be found in the tented field, which were strangers there before the gospel was known; and which are not even now to be found in any but Christian countries. Even the field of battle has felt the power of Christianity, and has been purged from many of its wanton cruelties and most dreadful atrocities by its spirit. Wars and fightings among Christian countries are now *merciful* in comparison with the savage spirit that pervades the warfare of heathen nations. But all this is to be counted as nothing, and because forsooth, the gospel has not yet

thoroughly purged the spirit of war from the human mind, it must be stigmatized as the author of an evil which has been in the world from the beginning! Should it be said that Christianity has been the direct cause of many wars and contentions, I ask what good thing is there that has not been perverted to some unholy purpose. Men have quarrelled about their food, and what then? Shall we have no bread? Men have barbarously fought for money. Will you carry out your logic, and say you will have no money because it has caused so much evil? I doubt the willingness of any sceptic to abide the consequences of his argument thus far. There have been wars, quarrels, and contentions among Christians! True, but why not tell the whole story? Why not say that men in all ages have been prone to strife and contention? Why not say that men of every nation and of every creed have raised the sword against their brethren? Yea, why not say that even infidels sometimes fight, and that this very infidelity which you now laud to the skies, at no very remote period, made France in its length and breadth a field of battle, and caused her palaces and vine-clad hills to run down with gore? Do you imagine that these facts are to be forgotten? I have heard of a thief who to avoid suspicion would join in the chase and cry louder than his companions, Stop thief! stop thief! Do the enemies of the gospel intend to pursue a similar course? Do they intend to be foremost in crying out against the contentions of Christians for the purpose of drawing away the attention of the world from the fact that their hands are even more deeply stained with blood?

I grant that those who have professed the Christian name have destroyed and devoured one another, but that Christianity ever directly tended to such results, I

utterly deny. No man can point to a word or syllable in all the teachings of Christ which allows or tolerates a spirit of war or persecution.* Did Jesus ever teach men to fight? Did he ever instruct his followers to persecute, bite and devour one another? I unhesitatingly answer in the negative. Never, no *never* did he utter one word of countenance for such things. On the contrary, he sternly forbade a retaliating, vindictive or persecuting spirit, and when one of his disciples drew a sword he received a prompt rebuke from his Master. I will here add, that Christ is the *only* teacher of religion under heaven, who forbids the workings of the spirit of war. Mohammedanism and every form of paganism rank among their highest virtues, exploits upon the ensanguined field, and promise the richest of heaven's blessings to those that die in the battle. Every system of religion and irreligion under heaven, modern infidelity not excepted, inculcates the spirit of war; and Christianity stands alone in this wicked world, uttering her authoritative mandate as the Saviour did to his disciple, "put up thy sword;" and pleading for "*peace* on earth and good will to men." And yet this, the only system which sternly forbids all strife and contention, must be condemned because some of its professors in open and high-handed rebellion against every precept and example of Christ have indulged and practised a spirit of contention! And this condemnatory sentence must come from whom? Why from the very men who are cherishing systems of religion which promise the highest seat in heaven to the man who bears the sword most valiantly; or from a spirit of infidelity which has rioted in blood wherever it has had power to open a vein, and which stands foremost in apologizing for the

* See note L.

shedding of blood. Admit then that professing Christians have persecuted and destroyed their fellows and what does it prove? It proves that they have violated the principles of the gospel, and practically denied their Master. This is the most that can be made of it, for I am unacquainted with any rule of justice that will make any system answerable for crimes which it strictly forbids. If it can be shown that Christ, either by precept or example, inculcated a spirit of revenge and war, then there will be some propriety in appealing to "persecution's rage" as an argument against his gospel. But as long as the sacred book contains a record of his teachings which positively forbid all acrimony and strife, it will be evident that it was not Christianity, but a want of conformity to its peaceable and heavenly principles which made men destroy one another.

2. It is objected, that Christianity is too vague and indefinite, so much so, that even its professors cannot agree among themselves in regard to its essential doctrine. One says *this* is Christianity, and another *that*, and a third defines it to mean something entirely different. No two are exactly agreed; and hence the sceptic concludes that it could not come from God, otherwise it would have been more definite, and so simple that it could be understood by all. But it is now such a mass of confusion that he considers it all a cheat.

I am satisfied that this one circumstance does more to cherish secret, if not open scepticism, than any other that can be named. I shall therefore give it an enlarged and careful examination.

It is proper to observe in the first place, that if God were about to communicate a religion to man, it must of necessity come through the medium of language, the only instrument of thought by which any system could

be communicated. Now it so happens that language is ambiguous and liable to be misunderstood. There is no work in existence which treats upon morals or ethics which all men will understand alike. Hence you will perceive that the difficulty of which you complain, is one that could not in the nature of the case be avoided, for we cannot conceive how even infinite wisdom could select from any vocabulary, words that ignorance could not misunderstand, or sophistry pervert. But I am not aware that any system can justly be charged with the unavoidable defects of the medium of its communication. I know not that Christianity is to be blamed or rejected because human language is imperfect and incapable of presenting it in a form that ingenuity might not distort, or blind bigotry pervert. There are but few politicians who can agree in regard to the precise construction which should be given to the constitution of the United States, and yet I never heard any man urge this as a reason why that instrument should be denounced or abandoned. Neither do I see any good reason for rejecting the Bible, because those who read it do not exactly agree in relation to the proper construction of certain of its passages.

I observe, however, that the differences of opinion among professors of Christianity are not so great and important as the sceptic would give us to understand. The disputes among Christians have for the most part been about unimportant matters, having little or no connexion with the vital interests of the system. It has rarely, if ever occurred, that they have disagreed about the fundamental truths upon which the system is founded. They have contended and frequently with a wrong spirit, about the garniture of the building, but they have not disagreed about the temple itself, or the

stability of its foundation. The great facts upc
Christianity rests for support, have not been qu
in all the sharp contentions and bitter controver
have disgraced the church. Jesus was the tr
siah, promised by the ancient prophets; he
and suffered and died as a malefactor, and ro
from the dead. These are the facts upon whic
tianity is founded; and I am not aware that tl
been any controversy in the church in regar
truth of these pillars of the temple. In minc
men have disagreed, and most shamefully abu
profession by the heat and acrimony of their st
in relation to the material facts, which affect t
or falsity of the system they have been uniform
plicit in their testimony.

We grant however that Christians do not
some doctrines that are of some considerabl
quence, and if our adversaries would be co
receive this as an evidence of the frailty of hu
ture, and the liability of man to err in judgn
would leave the subject here. But this circu
is so frequently pushed into the field of oppositi
gospel, that I feel disposed to pursue it a little
I will not here deny the disagreement of Ch
but I may be allowed to call in question the
some people to cast the first stone. There ar
us those who cease not day nor night to assail t
acter and revile the religion of Christ. In the
their vain philosophy, they scorn to learn wisd
Jesus, and contend, that all we can know of tl
religion, we must learn from nature. These a
santly harping upon the divisions of sentime
prevail among Christians, and because they dc
see with the same eyes in every particular, they

that the whole system is false. So loud and frequent are their declamations upon the diversity of sentiment among the professors of Christianity, that one who was unacquainted with facts, would be apt to suppose *they* had discovered the true philosopher's stone, which would test truth in a moment, and that there was nought but unbroken harmony of sentiment in the world, the Christian Church only excepted. There is a work called "Volney's Ruins," which for the beauty and sublimity of its style, as well as for the ingenuity of its argument, is perhaps surpassed by no work of its kind. Those who have perused that work will recollect the whole of its argument against all religion, centres in the position that there are diversities of sentiment among its professors. The argument is indeed levelled at all systems that claim a divine origin, but it is easy to perceive that the main shaft is aimed at Christianity. From the fact that the advocates of religion cannot agree in sentiment among themselves, the author draws the sweeping conclusion that the whole of it is false and pernicious.

Now it is time to take a look at the other side of this picture. It ought to be known that these men are guilty of the very same things for which they condemn Christians. Much as they talk about divisions in the ranks of Christ, and eagerly as they bear witness against him, it should be understood that their witness "agrees not together," a fraction more than did the testimony of those who stood up to bear false witness against him, in the days of his sojourn on earth. Save in an apparently obstinate and reckless determination to abuse and vilify the character and the religion of Christ, there is scarcely a shadow of harmony among those who stand in array against him and his religion. I pass over the

heathen world, who are all opposed to Christianity, and who are at variance among themselves, in silence, and remark, that you may take the teachings of infidels themselves, with all their superior illuminations and *true* philosophy, and you will not find them as harmonious as some would have you imagine. You may collect together all their writings, from Bolinbroke and Hume, down to Thomas Paine, Frances Wright, and the author of "Ecce Homo," and you can find in no sect or religion under the canopy of heaven, a more inconsistent medley of contradictions than they will present. Their incongruities of sentiment extend not only to their charges against Christ, but to the very radical principles of those systems which they offer as substitutes for the gospel.

Ask of Rousseau, the accomplished and learned philosopher, who opposed the gospel with all the powers of his gigantic mind, what he thinks of Christ and his religion? He will answer you thus: "I confess that the majesty of the Scriptures strikes me with admiration, and the purity of the gospel hath its influence on my heart. When Plato described his imaginary good man with all the shame of guilt, yet meriting the highest rewards of virtue, he gave a description of the character of Jesus Christ. If the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus were those of a God." If you turn to the author of the Age of Reason and ask his opinion, he will tell you he believes that Christ lived and taught excellent morality, and that he was a good man, the most prominent trait of whose character was philanthropy. And yet in another part of their works these same authors complain of his morality, as inferior to that of the ancient philosophers, and denounce him as an illegitimate child, a *thief*, and the greatest impostor that ever lived. The earl

of Shaftsbury says that those are to be censured who represent the gospel as a fraud, and he hopes its enemies will like it better, and its friends prize it more. And yet this same man insinuates that Christ was influenced by ambitious motives, and cherished a savage spirit of persecution, and that the Scriptures are a cunning invention designed to secure a profitable monopoly. He further contends, that those who advocate atheism are defending opinions that operate against the well-being of society, and yet he maintains that atheism has no tendency to take away a sense of right and wrong. He says that miracles are ridiculous, and Christianity is without foundation in truth; and yet it ought to be received when established by the magistrate. Mr. Hobbes says that God exists, and honour, worship, prayer and praise are due to him, and yet every thing that is not matter, is nothing, and all religion is ridiculous. Mr. Woolston says that the gospels are full of incredibilities, impossibilities, and absurdities, resembling Gulliverian tales of things which never had an existence except in romance. And yet this same man says he is far from infidelity, and writes for the honour of the "Holy Jesus, to whom be glory for ever, amen."

Dr. Tindal declares that Christianity when stripped of the additions which mistake or policy has added to it, is a most holy religion; and that all the doctrines of Christianity plainly speak for themselves as coming from an infinitely wise and holy God. And yet this same author contends that the Scriptures are obscure and fit only to perplex men, that the precepts of the gospel are loose and undefined, and incapable of being understood, that they give wrong apprehensions of God and are false and pernicious. Mr. Chubb says he hopes to share the favour of God in a future world, that the

mission of Christ is probably divine, and he was sent into the world to reveal to mankind the will of God, and that the New Testament contains many excellent cautions and instructions for our conduct, and yields a much clearer light than any other traditionary revelation. But after all this, the same author attempts to show that this New Testament which contains so many excellent moral instructions, and is so clear in its light, has tended to perplex and confuse mankind, and exhibits doctrines that are heretical, dishonourable to God, and injurious to man. The apostles were impostors, and the Acts of the Apostles resemble Jewish fables and popish legends rather than facts. The morality of Christ himself is not so good as that of other teachers, and the birth and resurrection of the same Jesus whose mission he allows to be divine, is incredible and ridiculous.

Lord Bolinbroke says that Christianity is but a republication of the religion of nature, and a benevolent system of pure morality. And yet he ridicules its doctrines as idle dreams, and wrote much for the express purpose of destroying it. (See Horne's Introduction, vol. i., chap. 1., sec. 1.) So I might go on almost *ad infinitum*, and find an endless variety of contradiction. One will assure you that the pretended miracles of Christ were a piece of deception, which he practised by means of some system of magic or jugglery of which he was the author, or which he had learned from some one else. Another will tell you that the *account* of these miracles is nought but a forgery, intended to deceive the world. Another will allow that Christ lived and was a good man, but enthusiastic, and the story of his resurrection was invented by his disciples, and if last of all you were to inquire of Wright, Owen or

Kneeland, they would stake you a thousand dollars that no such man as Christ ever lived, and the whole story is a fabrication invented by knavish priests some hundred years after the events are said to have occurred.* Thus they all "bear witness against him, but their witness agrees not together."

The same contradictions pervade these theories which they offer us in exchange for the gospel. Herbert, Hobbes, Shaftsbury, Bolinbroke, Gibbon, Volney and Paine, will tell you there is a God, who is great and good, and speak of him at times in strains of praise that would do honour to a Christian. But Hume contends that there is no evidence of the existence of such a being; and Voltaire and Helvetius, with the infidels of France, will give you for the first article of your creed, "There is no God." Others will contend that all nature owes its existence in its present form, to the laws of matter, and there is no need of a Creator; and others again, will raise the standard of Pantheism and contend that all is God.

So it is in relation to the nature and the future prospects of man. Some will amuse you with fine spun theories of metempsychosis or the transmigration of souls; and others mounting the system of progression will explain to you how man's ancestors were among the beasts or creeping things of the earth, he having progressed from that low estate, to his present condition, and is destined still to go onward till he shall look down upon his present capacities and powers as things beneath him. Mr. Chubb and Paine will inform you that they hope to live in a better and happier world, while Voltaire, Hume, Bolinbroke, Herbert, Tindal, Volney, Owen, Kneeland, and others, laugh at the idea

* See note M.

of future life, and declare that death is an eternal sleep. And yet these are the men who talk so long and loud about the differences that obtain among professors of Christianity. These are the men who can unite with as much hearty good will as Herod and Pilate, in opposition to Christ, and contend that there is no truth in his gospel because its professors differ in opinion. These men can read you a lecture upon the superior glory that shines in the light of nature and their philosophy, without apparently dreaming that they themselves are sadly at loggerheads, and save in opposition to Christ, there is scarcely a point of concord or agreement among them. Blame us not then if we say in the language of our Master, "pluck first the beam out of thine own eye, then shalt thou see clearly to take the mote from thy brother's eye." First settle your own disputes; get some system that all the infidels in the world will agree upon as truth, and then you may if you please, offer your services as mediators to settle disputes among Christians. I would not indeed urge these differences of opinion among sceptics as an argument against any of their systems, for however much men may differ, the truth is the same. But these facts do prove, in my estimation, that the light of nature and of reason is not so clear upon these subjects, as to secure harmony of opinion, or save from error. And there is another salutary lesson, that these contradictions among sceptics ought to teach them. They would be wise in this case to learn the meaning of that proverb which says, that those who live in glass houses should be cautious about casting stones at their neighbour's windows.

3. The third and last objection that I shall name is, that Christianity requires of men things that are impossible.

It requires us to love God with all our heart, soul mind and strength, and our neighbour as ourselves, and even our enemies to be included. Now says the sceptic, this is an unreasonable requirement, and I *cannot* obey it. I have never seen God, and I cannot love him whom I have not seen. You can not love God can you? You can love your father and your mother, your wife and your children. These you have seen and known, but you have not seen God. Very well; you can read the history of Washington, and though your eyes never beheld him, nor your hands handled him, your hearts can beat high with gratitude and love. You can even take up a work of fiction, and as you read the character of a hero of romance, you can weep over his ideal miseries, and every fibre of the heart can admire his name, and deeply feel on his account. But you cannot love God! You can look upon your own cherished form, that bears the impress of his hand, and reflect that he breathed into your nostrils the breath of life and nursed and brought you up; and poured his blessings all around you, and yet you cannot love him? You can look upon the heavens, the works of his hand and upon the earth overflowing with his benefactions. You can see the valleys covered with corn and the mountains with flocks, the storehouse filled with food, and the press overflowing with wine, and you cannot love the God, from whose hand all these things are given. Yea, you can take up the Bible and read the melting descriptions there given of that love in God, which is stronger than death, which many waters cannot quench nor the floods drown. *Love*, that watched over you with a parent's care in childhood and in youth. *Love*, vast as eternity and pure as the fire that burns upon the altar of heaven. LOVE, ineffably

glorious, that stooped from the throne on high, an spared not his own son that you might live! All thi you can read, and remain cold as Lapland, without on feeling of veneration, or one throe of gratitude to tha being, who has loved and blessed you thus abundantly Nay, it is not so. Your hearts are not made of stone neither are ye demons that cannot feel. Let God b known as he is—let the full radiance of his glory shin upon the benighted understanding, and the harde heart will melt before it, and the most obdurate sinne cry, Abba, Father!

But you cannot, you say, love your enemy. When man injures you to the extent of his power, and exhibit no determination or disposition to alter his course o conduct, it is impossible for you to love him! You ca love your children, and if one of them by some mean should become your enemy, you would continue to lov him. You can love your brother according to the flesl and if he by some ignorance of your character, shoul become your enemy, you would love him still. Wh then can you not love your enemies? Have you n been taught, that one God hath created us, and th having all one father, we are *all* brethren of the sam common family, and heirs together of the same immo tal inheritance that is incorruptible undefiled and fadet not away? These are the views which Christianit gives of our fellow-creatures, and with them there i nothing inconsistent or unreasonable, much less im possible in the command to love our enemies. It doe not necessarily follow from the fact, that we love ou enemy, that we must approve his conduct or love hi enmity. But if we look upon him as we ought, a broth of the same family with ourselves, a child of the sam God and a traveller to the same home, as well as a

object of our heavenly Father's love, we shall feel to pity rather than condemn, and love rather than hate. With these views, and these only, we are commanded to love our enemies, and it is a remarkable fact, that our Saviour when he gave that command, was careful to add the reason on which it was founded: "Ye shall be the children of your Father who is in heaven, for he maketh his sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and the unjust.

I have now pursued this subject as far as I at first intended, and it remains for you to say whether you will shut your eyes on all the glories of heaven and immortality, and look forward to a dreary eternity of nonentity. I am sensible, that the subject is but just begun, and that it has often been handled by abler hands; but I was anxious to contribute my mite towards increasing the faith and the consequent happiness of my fellow-creatures. The religion of Christ I most tenderly love. Call it enthusiasm or what you please, but the Lord knoweth, if there is any thing this side of eternity, that lies near my heart, it is the gospel of Christ Jesus my Lord. I view it as the only light that can dawn upon the darkness of the grave, and the only sure foundation of substantial and unchanging bliss in life. I feel and I know that it can bear the joyful cup of consolation to the prisoner in the dark dungeon of despair, and cause the song of deliverance to the captive to come up from the pit sweet as the music of angels in the paradise of God. It has been the joy of millions in all the varied circumstances of human life. It has been the stay and the staff of the aged, the comfort of the afflicted, and the support of the poor and the destitute. It has been with the sick and the dying, and made the dying bed feel soft as downy

pillows are. Yea, and it has lingered around the h of affliction, where bereaved affection mourns its dered ties, and mothers weep for their children, are not. The lone widow's tears have ceased to as she has caught its inspiring spirit, and the orp feeble moan has been hushed by its soothing voice. the strength of its faith, the aged pilgrim with rip locks, has leaned upon his staff over the grave o darling child, and joyed in the reflection that soon, soon, he should meet the lost one in heaven. N this all; it has shorn death of his terrors, and stri the grave of its darkness, and put the song of vi upon the quivering lips of millions in the last ag of the dying moment. Oh! then give me these w of life, and whatever else you may deny me, giv the privilege of leading my fainting, famishing fe mortals up to this fountain of living waters, where roll from the throne of God and the Lamb, and it be enough for me. If such is the gospel of Christ, I counsel you to hold it fast and not let it go. L aged hold it as their last hope, and the unfortuna their only refuge. Let fathers teach it to their chi and mothers to their daughters, that generation unborn may rise up and call the Saviour blessed; let the youth be admonished to beware how they s this most precious of heaven's jewels rashly from minds. I close in the language of the poet:—

"Oh! for a strong, a lasting faith
To credit what Jehovah saith,
To hear the message of his Son,
And call the joys of heaven our own."

DISCOURSE XIII.

CONCLUSION.

rtify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached e
after man. GAL. i. 11.

preceding discourses I have laboured to show
fundamental principles of the Gospel of Jesus
are sanctioned by the principles of reason, the
y of experience, and the voice of nature. I
ssed in review, the existence, the attributes,
government of God, and the still more glori-
heart-cheering doctrine of the resurrection of
, and have endeavoured to prove that they are
upon the substantial basis of truth. I have
mined some opposing theories, and attempted
te some of the more common and popular ob-
which are urged against the Christian religion.
I have succeeded in my purpose, it becomes
to say. It was my original intention to close
courses here, but circumstances being favour-
ave concluded to offer a few additional con-
ns, which are seriously commended to the at-
f the sceptic.

ell known that there are a multitude of reli-
stems in the world, all claiming a divine
nd if I do not err, it is a capital mistake with
tic, that he places them all upon the same
on, and argues against them all upon the same
principles. He places Mohammedanism, and
n, and Christianity, all upon the same com-

mon level, and frequently reasons as if he supposed that they would be alike affected by the same arguments. I have no disposition to question the motives which induce men to pursue this course, but I feel certain that it is a capital error in logic. The man who should attempt to overthrow the Newtonian system of philosophy, by classing it with the speculations of the ancient schools, would be guilty of no greater error than he that seeks to destroy Christianity by uniting it with the systems of men. There is a line of demarcation, between the gospel and all other systems of religion, as broad and deep as any that can be imagined between Newton's philosophy and the speculations of the ancients. The gospel of Christ is not after men. It has no pattern in the systems of this world, but it stands out in bold relief, radically and totally distinct from all other systems; based upon different principles, and supported by different evidence from any other religion under the whole heavens. You may pass over the habitable earth, and blot out every other system that can be found; you may obliterate every vestige of Paganism in all its forms, and along with it Mohammedanism with all its modifications, and confute every semblance of an argument by which they are defended, and, after all, you will not have touched one stone in the temple of Christ. You may, indeed, have purified the gospel from some of those corruptions which the wisdom of this world has incorporated with it, but the gospel itself would come forth from the ordeal, as gold from the furnace; and, being redeemed from a body of sin and death, would go on to renewed and more glorious conquests.

I deem it somewhat important that the sceptic should understand this matter; for, until it is under

stood, Christians will smile when, in his zeal to destroy Christianity, he engages in a Quixotic warfare with "another gospel, which is not another." I shall, therefore, make it the business of this discourse to point out some radical distinctions between Christianity and all other systems.

I. It differs in its nature.

The nature of the gospel is clearly defined in saying that it is a message of peace on earth, and good will to men. The ancient prophets called its author the Prince of peace. They said that he should speak peace to the heathen; that of the increase of his government and peace there should be no end; that under his reign God would extend peace like a river, and his gospel is repeatedly and emphatically called the covenant of peace. How well he sustained the character given him by the ancient prophets, any one may see from an examination of the record that is given of him in the New Testament. The annunciation of his birth, was, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and good will to men." In all his preaching he spoke the words of peace. Among his last words to his disciples were these: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." When he sent them out to preach, he charged them into whatever house they entered, to say, "Peace be to this house;" and, obedient to the command, they went forth, preaching peace to them that were far off, and to them that were nigh. Hence you will see the correctness of the remark, that the gospel is aptly described in saying, that it is a message of peace on earth, and good will to men.

Now there is not on earth another system of religion to which such a description can be properly applied. You may go over the face of the earth, and ex-

amine all the various systems that men have in
and I hazard nothing in saying, that you cann
one of which you can say, in truth, that it is a r
of peace and good will. What is still more rem
about the gospel, is the fact, that it speaks pea
to its most bitter enemies. It makes no exc
but what it says to one, it says to all. Its pr
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that persecute them, and pray for those that
fully use them. The Saviour did not say to h
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charge. It matters not how much the profes
Christianity may have maltreated, and curse
abused their fellows. The system itself toler
such thing, and it ought not to be made ans
for conduct which it positively forbids.

Again I remark, that the nature of the gospel
that all its appeals are made to the best and

principles of human nature. The God that it presents for our adoration, is pure, for it informs us that he is LOVE. In him the stormy passions of wrath, hatred, revenge, and cruelty, find no abiding place. The Saviour that it presents as our great pattern and example, is free from all those corrupt and boisterous passions, the exercise of which, sound wisdom would condemn. The heaven to which it points as our everlasting home, is pure. There no unclean thing can enter, but all is immortal purity and holiness. These things cannot be said of any other system. In the systems of men, the gods that are worshipped are characterized for little else than an exercise of those passions that disgrace and degrade humanity. They are, without exception, capricious, partial, tyrannical, unmerciful and cruel. Their most exalted virtues, are feats of carnage and blood, and their highest enjoyments, are feasts of gluttony, and scenes of inebriation and debauchery. Their heaven is little better than a banqueting-hall, where the sensual appetites are indulged with unbridled liberty. Hence it happens that their incentives to action are addressed to the lowest and basest passions of the human heart. The love of fame, the passions of jealousy, revenge, and lust, are touched as the springs from which the conduct must proceed. The hope of a narrow and corrupt heaven, and the fear of the anger of their gods, are the two moving springs of action. It is not so with the gospel. This seeks to draw and allure by the sweet influences of love divine. It leaves its votaries freemen, excited only by the best and tenderest motives, while other systems drive the slave with the lash, or purchase the hypocrite with a bribe. It would be well for the sceptic to bear these things in mind, and when he

objects to religion, that its motives are mercenary, and that it makes men slaves and hypocrites, or exalts the few at the expense of the many, he would do well to recollect that, however true his objection may be in other cases, it has no solid foundation when applied to the gospel of Christ.

II. The gospel differs from all other systems in the object which it proposes to accomplish.

View Christianity in whatever light you will, and you will find that its highest and holiest, nay, its only object is to make men better and happier. It is designed for man, and for man alone, and it brings all its powers to operate upon the human heart, to mould it into the pure and heavenly image of its God. The systems of men have a far different object in view. *They* seek not so much to operate upon man, as upon their gods. They seek not to improve, purify, and elevate man, but to placate the wrath, and conciliate the favour of their deities. You have only to look at heathen lands, in order to see the truth of this remark. There the people are engaged in the performance of a thousand rites, and the observance of a thousand forms; many of them costly as their means will allow, and painful as nature can endure. There victims bleed upon their altars, and volumes of incense arise from temples devoted to the service of their gods. What, I ask, is the object? The answer is, to have an effect upon the disposition or purposes of their divinities. They all commence with the position, that the gods are unpropitious, and something must be done to secure their favour. Every principle of doctrine proceeds, more or less remotely, if not directly, from this single position. Hence they labour and suffer, not to make themselves any better, but to operate upon their gods,

and secure their friendship. This remark is true of all systems, save the gospel. Man never yet invented a system of religion, which did not seek as its first object to make God better than he would be without it. In this respect, the gospel stands alone, and it presents the only system under heaven, whose object is to train and cultivate the human heart, and make it what it should be. It commences with the position, that God is good enough as he is, and ever has been; and hence it seeks, not to bend God's will or disposition to the caprice of his creatures; but it lays hold upon man, and seeks to conform him to the divine image. It requires no burnt-offering or sacrifice, no rites of privation or hardship to appease the wrath of its God. But it requires man to raise his affections and hopes from dust and vanity, and employ his nobler powers, in promoting his own happiness, and that of his fellow-creatures. If I mistake not, this is a feature of the gospel which has been overlooked, not less by sceptics, than by many who profess to be Christians. It would be well for both if they would bear in mind that Christ has never instructed us to labour for the purpose of changing God, but to benefit ourselves. In a particular manner, the sceptic would do well to remember, when he objects to religion, that it consists of doctrines and practices, which are designed to affect an invisible being, while they bear heavily upon man, that the remark will not apply to Christianity. The gospel claims not to be a religion which man has made for God, but a religion which God has made for man. It should be remarked, further, that while the gospel claims to be a revelation from God, it claims to be *no more* than a revelation. Its object is not like other systems, to make things true which otherwise

would be false, but to reveal what is already true. "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth," is the Saviour's own declaration of the object of his mission.

Another distinguishing feature in the gospel, is its impartiality. All other systems have for their object the exaltation of a few, and the degradation of the many. They propose to bless only a few, and all their favours are confined to a narrow circle. Man never invented a system of religion that was not partial. But it is far otherwise with the gospel. It is impartial as the light of heaven. It scatters its blessings with unsparing liberality upon all; and, while it denies its ultimate joys not even to its most bitter enemies, it teaches that all shall be brought in, and finally be made the recipients of its benefactions. Here, also, it differs widely from all other systems, and by this it is marked as entirely distinct from the inventions of men. Man is too selfish and partial in his feelings, to invent such a system. It takes the impartiality of that God who maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and the unjust, to a system so broad and extensive. Will the sceptic think of this, when he urges the partiality of religion as an objection against it?

III. Christianity differs from all other systems in the nature of the evidence by which it is sustained.

It is a remarkable fact, that our Saviour did not ask the people to take his own word or that of the disciples for the truth of what he taught. He appealed to nature around him, to the ancient prophets, and his own works as the evidences that he taught them the truth. The fowls of the air, and the lilies of the field, the

: sun, and the gently-falling shower, were his
that he uttered the truth, when he taught the
l care and impartial favour of his Father and
l. These were evidences that they could see
them every day of their lives, and their testi-
could not be impeached. There is no other
or founder of a system of religion that ever
led in this way. When Mohammed taught the
that he had seen visions, and had been permit-
nter the upper world, his followers were obliged
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is in all his teachings no appeal made to things
ere tangible to the senses for the proof of what
ght. The same is true of all other systems,
e gospel. The veracity of interested individu-
he sum total of proof by which they are accom-

n: when Jesus taught his grand and glorious
e of the resurrection of the dead, he did not pre-
as a speculation or vision of his own. But he
e people that he himself would descend into the
and, rising from the dead, show them by demon-
that it was true. I have before shown, that in
spect, he redeemed his pledge, and I need not
hat point again. The evidence was of such a
that it could not be gainsayed or disputed, and
t, therefore, to be placed upon a par with sys-
which claim no tangible evidence or ocular
stration.

n: he appealed to his works as the evidence of
ine authenticity of his mission. He healed the
ve hearing to the deaf, sight to the blind, and life
lead; and to these miracles he constantly appeal-
he truth of his words. It is especially worthy of

remark that these miracles differ materially from the pretended miracles of impostors. They were void of all appearance of ostentation and show, or of any circumstances that manifested a disposition to give them an imposing aspect. When an impostor has pretended to work miracles, he has usually admitted his followers only to see them. He has had his subject in some particular place or position. He has repeated his mysterious incantations which none but the initiated were able to understand. Of all such cases I may say, without exception, that they have been surrounded by circumstances under which deception might hide herself. But you see none of this in the miracles recorded in the New Testament. They were performed any where and every where that occasion presented. They were performed in the open light of day, and before the scrutinizing gaze of his most violent and bitter enemies. I risk nothing in saying, that if Christ was an impostor, and these miracles were not actually performed, he was such an impostor as never lived before or since his day; and he proceeded with an appearance of frankness and honesty, that can be found in the case of no deceiver since the world was made. The sceptic would do well to remember these circumstances, and to ponder them well in his heart, before he classes the miracles of Christ with the juggling tricks, and feats of legerdemain, which have been performed by deceivers. Be it remembered that Christ appealed to these miracles as proof that his words were faithful and true. When he did this, he did not ask them to take his word, or the word of his disciples, as evidence that he had actually wrought them. On the contrary, he spake to the very men, that saw them with their own eyes, and he asked them to believe

him, not on account of what he had said concerning himself, but for what their eyes had seen of his power. The lame and the halt, the deaf and the blind, who had been healed by his power, were before them, and among them, and they knew whether the miracles had been wrought or not. If they had not been wrought, nothing on earth could exhibit greater folly than the course he pursued. In such a case, we shall be reduced to the necessity of supposing that he appealed to his enemies, and told them to their faces, that they had seen things which they had not seen, and which, in fact, had never been performed.

It may be said that at this day, we are under the necessity of relying upon the testimony of others for our evidence that the miracles were performed. This is true, and I would fain ask what other evidence we can have. Suppose the miracles were actually performed, I should be pleased to know what other method could have been adopted to bear them down to us, than that which has been adopted? I would fain ask the sceptic to devise some plan, by which events that occurred eighteen hundred years ago, could be proved to us, which should give us greater evidence than that which we now possess, that they did actually occur. We have the recorded testimony of at least four credible historians, two of whom say they were eyewitnesses of the facts. And then we have the negative fact, that no man in that age or country disputed the truth of these things. More than this, we have the unparalleled spread of Christianity among the very people who could have discovered the cheat, if it had been one. Now let us suppose for a moment, that the miracles recorded in the New Testament had actually been wrought; I ask the sceptic what plan he would

adopt to prove it to the people of this age, with any greater clearness, than it is already proved? Let him think of this question, before he complains of a lack of evidence, or classes the miracles of Christ with the tricks of impostors.

Perhaps I have wandered from the precise point with which I commenced. I wanted to show you that Christianity, at the time of its introduction, came to the people with evidence that was tangible to their senses; that it set up higher claims, and pointed to evidence of a kind that was never claimed or possessed by any other system. It pointed the people to nature before them, and to miracles which they themselves had seen, instead of directing them to invisible things, or requiring them to take the word of those who were interested in its establishment. In this I think it differs widely from any system of human invention.

There is another field of evidence in favour of Christianity, which is, perhaps, more full, clear, and explicit in this day, than it was in the days of Christ; and which, I believe, cannot be claimed by any other system. I allude to the fulfilment of prophecy. The prediction of future events is as much beyond the power of man alone, as is the miraculous cure of the sick, or the raising of the dead. Hence, if we now have ocular demonstration of the fulfilment of prophecies uttered in the Bible, we have proof positive of its divine truth, fully sufficient to show that it is not after man. This evidence is abundant; and though we cannot point to miracles performed upon physical nature, yet we can point to facts now before the eyes of the world, which were the subject of prophecy many centuries past. Thus it will be seen that though the evidence of Christianity may have diminished in one

department, it has accumulated in another, and every century is adding to its stores.

I cannot enter largely into this field of evidence in one discourse. An instance or two must suffice for our present purpose. I take the remarkable prophecies of Christ in relation to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the circumstances which should precede that event. I select these because they are of a character which no human wisdom could foresee, and were fulfilled with an accuracy which can leave no doubt of their identity. Of the signs that should precede that dreadful event, the following were foretold.

1. The appearance of false Christs or Messiahs. "Many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many." Mark xiii. 5. 6. Luke xxi. 8. Josephus informs us that, as the national calamities increased, there were many who pretended to divine inspiration, and deceived the people. He assures us that the land was overrun with magicians, seducers, and impostors, who drew the people after them in multitudes into solitudes and deserts, to see signs and miracles which they promised to show by the power of God. Among these impostors was Dositheus, the Samaritan, who averred that he was the Christ foretold by Moses; Simon Magus, who said he was the son of God, and Theudas, who pretended to be a prophet, and persuaded multitudes to follow him to Jordan, declaring that he was divinely authorized to divide the waters, that they might pass over in safety. Many others might be named, but these are sufficient to show the fulfilment of the prophecy, "Many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many."

2. The second sign was wars and commotions.

"Ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, and commotions." Mark xiii. 7. Luke xxi. 9.

Previous to the destruction of Jerusalem, the greatest agitation prevailed throughout the Roman empire, and the struggles for succession to the imperial throne were attended with the most savage and sanguinary conflicts. Not less than four emperors, Nero, Galba, Otho, and Vitellus, suffered violent deaths in the short space of eighteen months. The Saviour said further: "Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom." Not long after this prophecy was uttered, the Jews and Syrians fell out about the right of the city of Cesarea, and about twenty thousand Jews were slain. Upon this the Jews were exasperated, and dividing themselves into parties, burnt and plundered the neighbouring cities of the Syrians with immense slaughter. The Syrians, in revenge, rose upon the Jews, and as Josephus says, every city was divided into two armies. At Scythopolis, Askelon, Ptolemais, Gadara, Alexandria, and Damascus, there were immense slaughters. The Jews of Peraea rose up against the people of Philadelphia; the Jews and Galileans against the Samaritans, and the whole nation against the Romans. Thus nation rose against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

3. "There shall be famines and pestilences in divers places." See Matt. xxiv. 7. Mark xiii. 8. Luke xxi. 10. There was a famine mentioned by Suetonius, Tacitus, and Eusebius, which occurred in the days of Claudius Cesar, and was so severe at Jerusalem, that multitudes perished for want of food. Josephus also informs us that Judea was sorely afflicted with pestilences about these days.

4. "There shall be earthquakes." Matt. xxiv. 7.

Mark xiii. 8. Luke xxi. 11. Of these there were many which occurred about the times to which our Saviour referred. There was one at Crete, in the reign of Claudius, and others at Smyrna, Miletus, Chios, Samos, and other places. Tacitus mentions one at Rome, in the same reign, and says that in the reign of Nero, the cities of Laodicea, Hieropolis, and Colosse, were overthrown. So also was the celebrated city of Pompeii, in Campania, destroyed by an earthquake.

Many other circumstances which were the subject of prophecy, might be named. Such as the fearful sights, and signs, and wonders, the persecutions of Christians, the encompassing of Jerusalem with armies, and casting a trench around her; the miseries of the Jews, &c., &c. It were an easy matter to show from authentic history, that these things occurred precisely as they had been foretold. But I pass on to note the prophecy of the final destruction of the city, and its fearful accomplishment.

"The days will come in the which there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. They shall lay thee even with the ground, and shall not leave in thee one stone upon another." Matt. xxiv. 2. Mark xiii. 2. Luke xxi. 24.

At the time this prophecy was uttered, Jerusalem was in her glory, filled with the riches of earth, and her streets thronging with the busy multitude. It was a time of universal peace and prosperity. More than five hundred and sixty years had that city stood in its grandeur, and there were no circumstances, upon which the eye of human wisdom could justly found an opinion that it was destined soon to fall and rise no more. But it fell, and those who have read the his-

tory of its downfall, cannot fail to know that it came to pass in a manner precisely corresponding with the predictions of Christ. Every page of history relating to the destruction of that city, contains the most clear and positive proof of the divine origin of the prophetic warnings that Christ uttered concerning its overthrow. Nay, its mouldering ruins remain unto this day, a tangible evidence of the same fact. Should the reader feel disposed to pursue his inquiries further upon this subject, he is directed to "Horne's Introduction," App. No. 4, to vol. 1, chap. ii., Sec. 3; where he will find a mass of facts from which the above is briefly abridged. A modern traveller thus speaks of the present state of Jerusalem: "From the centre of a neighbouring elevation, the traveller sees a wild, rugged mountainous desert—no herd pasturing on the summit, no forests clothing the acclivities, no water flowing through the valleys; but one rude scene of melancholy waste, in the midst of which the ancient glory of Judea bows her head in widowed desolation. No 'streets of palaces and walks of state,' no high raised arches of triumph, no fountains to cool the air, or porticoes to exclude the sun, no single vestige to announce its former military greatness or commercial opulence remains."

To the foregoing I may add an instance of more ancient date. It is the prophecy of Ezekiel in relation to Tyre. See Ezek. xxvi. 3, 4, 5, 14.

This prophecy was made while Tyre was in her glory. It was one of the most flourishing cities in the world; and to the eye of human wisdom there was nothing more improbable, than that such a place should become a desolate rock, and be used for the drying of fishermen's nets. Yet such is now, and has long been,

ıal state of Tyre. Maundrell who travelled in
:er part of the last century, says: "This city
g in the sea upon a peninsula, promises, at a
e, something very magnificent. But when you
ear it, you find no similitude of its former glory
ch it was so renowned in former times. On the
ide, it has an old Turkish castle ungarrisoned;
which, you see nothing here but a mere Babel,
en walls, pillars, vaults, &c., there being not so
s one entire house left. Its present inhabitants
y a few poor wretches, harbouring themselves
ts, and subsisting chiefly by fishing, who seem
reserved here by divine providence, as a visible
nt, how God has fulfilled his word concerning
that it should be as the top of a rock, a place
ers to dry nets upon." No earthly wisdom could
retold such an event; and hence, so long as
speaks, and the desolate rocks of Tyre remain
for fishermen to spread their nets, so long will
emain a tangible and unanswerable argument
ır of the truth and divine authenticity of these
ic writings.

:e manner the prophet foretold the desolation
ıt. See Ezekiel xxix. 15: also xxx. 6, 12. More
o thousand and four hundred years have elapsed
.is prophecy was delivered, and the event fore-
s at that time of the most improbable nature.
vas at that time in the height of her glory, one
most renowned and powerful kingdoms of all
y. The prophecy, however, has been fulfilled
very letter. Not long after it was delivered,
vith its eighteen thousand cities, and seventeen
ı inhabitants, was conquered by the Babyloni-
l Persians. When the Persian empire was

subverted, Egypt became subject to the Macedonians, then to the Romans, then to the Saracens, then to the Mamelukes, and it is now a province of the Turkish empire. Syrene is in ruins; the idols are scattered, the canals neglected, her rivers dry, and an immense region of country on both sides of the Nile, which was formerly fertile as a garden, is now utterly desolate, overwhelmed with sand in flying blasts, and consigned to everlasting solitude. Such is Egypt, once the glory of the world; and the traveller upon her parched sands, who weeps over the sepulchre of her departed greatness, may read in her present condition the truth that God spake by the mouth of the prophets.

I cannot pursue this subject. To do it tolerable justice would require volumes, instead of a discourse. I have selected these instances out of a multitude of the same kind, simply to show the sceptic, that when he takes hold of the Christian religion, he grapples with a subject that claims something more than conjecture or fancy for its support. When dealing with other systems, he may take his own course; but when he engages with Christianity, he must prepare himself to meet with stubborn facts. He may be assured that he is engaged with a system, which, in its nature, and object, and evidences, differs radically from the systems that men have invented. A system whose evidences have caused the most profound philosophers the world ever saw to bow down and confess that it was not after man.

APPENDIX.

NOTE A—page 6.

THE evidences of Christianity are divided into *external* and *internal*. The external evidences are again divided into *direct* and *collateral* or *auxiliary*. The direct external evidences of Christianity are such, says Mr. Buck, "as arise from the nature, consistency and probability of the facts; and from the simplicity, uniformity, competency and fidelity of the testimonies by which they are supported. The collateral evidences are either the same occurrences supported by heathen testimonies, or others which connect with and corroborate the history of Christianity. Its *internal evidences* arise either from its exact conformity with the character of God, from its aptitude to the frame and circumstances of man, or from those supernatural convictions and assistances which are impressed on the mind by the immediate operation of the Divine Spirit."

The principal evidences of Christianity may be conveniently considered under the following divisions, viz.: 1. The testimony borne to its numerous *miracles*, including the circumstances, character and conduct of the witnesses. 2. The fulfilment of ancient predictions relating to Christ and his religion, and the accomplishment of various predictions of our Lord and his apostles. 3. Its perfect conformity with all

that can be known of the divine character. 4. Its admirable adaptation to the moral nature and wants of man.

It is not designed to give a catalogue of the principal writers on this subject, but it may be useful to mention a few of the most popular and valuable works and which are accessible to almost every individual in the country. Since the truth of Christianity is susceptible of proof from a great variety of facts and considerations, it will be found highly advantageous to read several authors. By this means one is enabled to see the strong points of the cumulative argument in favour of Christianity, as they have appeared to different minds.

This subject deserves the attention of every person in the community, whether believer or unbeliever in the divine origin of the Christian religion. If one receives Christianity as divine, he ought to know the grounds on which he so receives it. If he rejects it and denies that it came from heaven, he at least owes it to himself and the community to be able to tell under what principles of human nature, and from what impulses and motives it sprung at first and has thus far been perpetuated.

The reader will consult with pleasure, Paley's Evidences of Christianity; Wilson's and also M'Ilvaine's Lectures on the Evidences of Christianity; Watson's Apology for the Bible and for Christianity; Lord Lyttelton's Letter to G. West, Esq. on the Conversion of St. Paul; Leslie's Short Method with Deists; Pickering's Lectures in Defence of Divine Revelation; and particularly Channing's Discourse on the Evidences of Revealed Religion; also, Thayer's Christianity against Infidelity, a late work.

NOTE B—page 21.

It seems that all the ancient philosophers adopted the idea of the eternity of matter. Dr. Good says: "If we search into the systems of all the ancient schools of philosophy, amid

an infinite variety of jarring opinions in other respects, we find them, perhaps, without an exception, concurring in a belief of the eternity of matter, or that general substance which constitutes the visible world around us." Farther on, the same author says: "Under some modification or other, however, the doctrine of the eternity of matter appears to have been universal among the philosophers of ancient nations. That a loose and floating idea of its creation, by the energy of a pure intelligence, is occasionally met with, and which probably existed as a remnant of patriarchal tradition, must be admitted: for the Tuscans were generally allowed to have entertained such an idea, and we find it frequently adverted to and opposed by the leaders of the different schools; but in no instance does it seem to have been imbodied or promulgated as a doctrine of philosophy."

The doctrine of the eternity of matter has been held by some Christians, and particularly under one of its various modifications. Hermogenes, probably an African of the second century, contended that matter was eternal, which opinion was written against by Tertullian in a tract which is still extant. Hermogenes seems to have thought matter eternal because he believed it to be essentially *evil*, and hence it could not have been created by God. The reason which the philosophers assigned for its eternity was simply that it was impossible for something to spring out of nothing, "*Ex nihilo nihil fit.*"

Several of the ancient Christian Fathers, according to Dr. Good, as Athenegoras, Tatian, Theophilus of Antioch, Athanasius, and Gregory Nazianzen appear to have concurred with the philosophers in this mode of thinking. And Justin Martyr affirms it to have been the general creed of his time. "For that the word of God," says he, "*formed the world out of unfashioned matter*, Moses distinctly asserts, Plato and his adherents maintain, and we have been taught

to believe." It may be presumed that Plato had a much greater share in the business than Moses, who seems to teach that God by his own almighty energies *created* matter, as well as wrought it into form.

Milton believed matter to be eternal, but he regarded it as "an efflux of the Deity." That it has always existed independently of God, he declared to be inconceivable, and since he thought that the universe was "made not out of nothing, but out of matter," he concluded that it must "have originated from God at some particular point of time." This theory however does not relieve the subject, but rather involves it in still deeper difficulties. It virtually represents God himself as *material*; for otherwise matter could not be an efflux from him. The absurdity is certainly no greater in conceiving a spiritual being as *creating* matter out of nothing, than as producing it *from himself*.

The idea of the absolute creation of matter involves no demonstrable absurdity, "Why," says Dr. Good, "may not *something spring from nothing*, when the proposition is applied to Omnipotence? I may be answered, perhaps, because it is a self-contradiction, an impossibility, an absurdity. This, however, is only to argue in a circle; for why is it a self-contradiction or an impossibility?" This question no man can satisfactorily answer. "It is absurd," Mr. Good afterward adds, "to suppose that matter does not exist; it is absurd to suppose that it does exist eternally and independently of the Creator; it is absurd to suppose that it constitutes the Creator himself; but it is not absurd to suppose its absolute formation out of nothing by the exercise of an Almighty power, and as one of these four propositions must necessarily be true, reason should induce us to embrace the last with the same promptitude with which we reject the other three."

NOTE C—page 37.

ng the ancient philosophers Democritus taught that
was intelligent in many of its corpuscles, and unin-
in the rest. Plato and Aristotle on the contrary
hat it was intelligent as a whole, though unintelligent
parate parts, while Epicurus contended that it was
igent in all its parts and particles whether united or
d.

NOTE D—page 41.

osition here conceded for the sake of the argument
y destitute of proof. Life is so far from being the
f organic structure that it is the cause of it. The
he seed cast into the ground is the cause of the organ-
of the plant. A seed may be cast into the earth but
state. We ask why does it not? And the answer
found in the fact that its vital power was destroyed.
e of the seed, then, is doubtless the cause and not the
f organization. It is worthy of remark, that we
find organization in any department of creation which
be traced to antecedent life, as its cause. The fol-
extract is from Dr. Copeland's Appendix to Rich-
Physiology:—

siologists are divided into those admitting a principle
nd those attributing the vital phenomena to organi-
olely; the latter class contending that life presuppo-
nization, the former that organization presupposes the
e of life. . . . . Those who contend that life is the
f organization, ought to explain in what manner the
ation took place: they should show the means em-
to produce the disposition of parts which they con-
quisite to give rise to vital phenomena. If they deny
nary influence of vital power, associated with the

particles of matter let them explain by what other agency the different atoms can assume organic actions. All effects must have a cause; and it is better to assign one according to which difficulties may be accounted for than to contend for the efficacy of properties or powers of the existence of which we have no evidence, and which even granting them to exist, can only be considered as inferior agents, or certain manifestations, of a vital principle."

Note E—page 48.

For a description of the structure of the eye, the reader is referred to Paley's Natural Theology, chap. iii, and to the Encyclopædia Americana. Art. Eye. Sturm was evidently not far from the truth in contending that an examination of the eye was a cure for Atheism. It seems almost impossible for any one candidly to consider this wonderful organ in its structure, its position, and its appendages, without being forced to confess that it cannot be the effect of chance, but is the work of an intelligent and infinitely wise Creator.

Note F—page 49.

This remark, it may be said, is not true, since some men are blind and yet live comfortably and happy. But the remark was not made in reference to here and there an individual destitute of sight. Let the human race be at this moment deprived of vision, and there must intervene a miracle, or it would soon become extinct.

Could this supposition of universal blindness, or rather this universal destitution of eyes take place, it would furnish an opportunity to test one of the many vagaries of Atheism, I mean the system, if so it may be called, of *Appetency*. The principle assumed, for there was nothing but unqualified assumption about it, was simply this:—That animals,

f some deficiency in their structure, were constantly
ring to supply that deficiency, so that this exertion,
l through a long series of generations, imperceptibly
its effect, and produced in the animal a new organ
. In this way it was assumed, the elephant provi-
unk, the bird its wings, &c. If this hypothesis be
probably came by eyes by the same protracted but
l process, and we might reasonably anticipate that
e race be deprived of eyes, it would in course of
nish itself again with so necessary an organ. There
slight objections, however, to this doctrine of *appe-*
The first is that it is somewhat difficult to conceive of
l organ which was never possessed. The invention
m-engine, or any other piece of complicated ma-
was nothing to be compared with the first conception
uman eye. But notwithstanding all his improve-
science, man has not made a single addition to his
e for the last five or six thousand years. This is a
ular if he had been so successful in discovering and
the want of eyes, ears, mouth, heart, hands, feet,
re. The second objection arises from the utter im-
y that man or any other animal could exist for any
time while destitute of these organs. Let the whole
ace be deprived of their eyes, and although they
ly conceive their loss, we know they must perish a
times before this all-procuring *appetency* could have
first step towards supplying the fatal deficiency.

Note G—page 72.

id in his Essay on the active powers of man (p. 8,)
following language: "If I am asked what I mean
r, I can only explain myself by saying, it is that
extended, figured, coloured, moveable, hard or soft,

rough or smooth, hot or cold: that is, I can define
other way than by enumerating its sensible qualiti

That excellent philosopher Dugald Stewart gives
view of the subject. The following brief quotati
show that his opinions accord with those express
foregoing discourse. "It appears that we have t
evidence of the existence of mind that we have o
istence of body. * * * Surely when we attempt to
the nature of that principle which feels and thinks
by saying that it is a material substance, or that it i
sult of material organization we impose on ourselves
—forgetting, that matter as well as mind, is known
its qualities and attributes alone, and that we ar
ignorant of the essence of either." Works, vol. i,

"Of the essence of matter," says Dr. Good, "
nothing; and altogether as little of many of its mo
qualities." Hence it is obvious that our acquainta
mind, is as accurate and as extensive as that wit
notwithstanding our fancied knowledge on the latter
See also Locke.

NOTE H—page 114.

The view here taken of rewards and punishmen
intended to countenance the idea that God takes no
ate cognizance of the actions of men. The writer c
that God is ever present to mark our virtues and vi
instead of interposing with a miraculous agency,
reference to established laws, to reward and punis
formly employs those laws of man's moral and phy
ture, as the instruments by which to reward and p

NOTE I—page 133.

No truth is more fully, and few more frequently
in the Holy Scriptures than the *impartial justice* of

d in a great variety of terms, and in the strongest pos-
nanner. The reader immediately perceives that it was
ortant point with the author of the Bible, to impress
he human mind, this salutary and restraining truth,
e Judge of all the earth shall do right. For this pur-
ne pages of inspiration often present us with the fact,
s is "a *just* God." And lest a declaration so unequiv-
this should be construed in such a manner as to ex-
nly the general principle of the divine government,
hich there might be numerous departures in practice,
taught in the most explicit terms that no hope of im-
in sin should, under any circumstances, be indulged.
we are met with such passages as the following:—
a renderest unto *every man* according to his works:"—
hat doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he
one and there is no respect of persons:"—"Though
join in hand the wicked shall not go unpunished:"—
vill by no means clear the guilty."

atever may be the consequences, then, it seems impos-
hat we can evade the plain and express meaning of
assages as these. They speak a truth, which neither
or circumstances can affect, and which it deeply con-
every subject of God's moral government to heed. Let
e sinner, therefore, flatter himself with the delusive
of escaping the just judgments of Heaven. They will,
ust come: come in God's own time, but come una-
ly.

f it is pleasing to reflect that God's unbending justice
ot annihilate, or interfere with his infinite mercy. In-
he Psalmist is so bold, perhaps some would think so
xical, as to assign this impartial justice as the reason
nercy should be ascribed to God: "Also unto thee, O
belongeth mercy; for thou renderest unto every man
ling to his works." Hence, it appears, whether we can

explain the fact or not, that justice and mercy are not antag onist principles in the divine government. On the contrar they are, as the present bishop of New Jersey once expres ed himself, "twin-sisters." Hand in hand, they go forth t execute the will of God, and in the performance of their hig commission they know no strife. They proceed from a com mon source and aim at a common end. God in being *just* i not *unmerciful*; nor in being *merciful* is he *unjust*.

The popular idea of *mercy*, *pardon* or *forgiveness*, implie that their exercise is necessarily attended with a partial o total surrender of the claims of strict justice. This notion however, seems to

> "Set at odds Heaven's jarring attributes,
> And with one excellence another wound."

But it is believed that a careful examination of the subject, a it is presented in the Scriptures, would explode this ide There God is represented as "forgiving iniquity, and tran gression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty He is called "a *just* God, and a *Saviour*." The Psalmi alluding to his dealings with the children of Israel, say "Thou *forgavest* them, though thou *tookest vengeance* on the inventions.

It is worthy of remark, that there is a very obvious an important difference between forgiving *sin*, and forgiving remitting the just *punishment* of sin. Of the former th Scriptures uniformly speak; of the latter, never. The obje of Christ's mission was to "save his people from their sin —"to take away the sin of the world." This is the com mon language of the New Testament, but nowhere do w read that Christ came to save mankind from any punishme which their sins justly deserve.

Two circumstances have contributed chiefly to the intr duction and perpetuation of the popular opinion on this sul

ject. The *first* is the assumption so generally made that endless misery is the penalty of the divine law, and of course the just punishment of transgression. A grosser assumption than this was never made, but being made, it necessarily follows that the sinner cannot be saved, and does not receive the just punishment of his sins. The popular doctrine of *forgiveness* relieves the difficulty, and by the sacrifice of the divine justice, rescues a portion of this world of sinners from their hopeless doom.

The other circumstance which has contributed to the perpetuation of this doctrine is a neglect to distinguish between a perfect and an imperfect government. By a perfect government is meant one, in the administration of which, every transgressor receives, or may receive, a punishment exactly proportionate to his criminality. By an imperfect government one which can at best boast of nothing more than an approximation to justice. Human governments are necessarily imperfect. Legislators cannot foresee and provide for every individual case that may occur. They cannot know the circumstances which determine the culprit's criminality. Nor can our courts of justice do much better. With the best intentions and the most uncompromising regard for right, it is impossible that they should not sometimes be deceived. Instances will occur where the innocent will be made to suffer without the fault of any one; and others may be found where perjury shall direct the sword of justice to the bosom of the upright. In no case can they learn all the facts necessary to form a righteous judgment, and consequently while some suffer more than their crimes deserve, others escape, in part at least, the just punishment of their offences. In such nations as have made the greatest advancement in civilization, the arts, and religion, and where sentiments of humanity are most widely diffused and most powerful, it has become a maxim that it is better to suffer some of the guilty to go

unpunished, than to punish the innocent. Hence the power of pardon—a power which in human governments is a virtual acknowledgment of their imperfection.

In the government of God, however, the case is reversed. Here there can be no mistake, no deception. The lawgiver is also the judge. He reads the heart, and seeth in secret. No circumstance how trifling soever, which can affect the innocence or guilt of the individual, will, in making up the sentence, be forgotten. And the sentence which Heaven pronounces, he is able also to execute. He and he only in the universe, can exactly proportion the punishment in every case to the criminality; and shall not the judge of all the earth do right—perfectly right in every case and with every individual? And if so, where is the propriety of the remission of the just punishment? Does justice, divine justice, demand any thing inconsistent, with the greatest good of the punished? Or can the best interests of the divine government be as well sustained by the unnecessary exercise of pardon, as by the uniform administration of strict justice?

For many excellent remarks on this subject, the reader is respectfully referred to an able essay by the Rev. S. Cobb, entitled "Punishment and Forgiveness," found in the Universalist Expositor, vol. i, p. 148.

Note J—page 139.

It has been common to speak not only of the immortality of the soul, but also of the original immortality of the whole man in his present two-fold nature. The idea that man was created immortal, and that he would never have died, had he not been involved in transgression, has been popular for ages, and yet it amounts to no more than a childish play upon words. For that only is *immortal* which CANNOT DIE. It is thus our Saviour describes the resurrection state as one of

immortality, when he says of its subjects, "neither can they die any more." To speak therefore of an *immortal* being as falling under the power of *death* is a solicism, and is in fact no less absurd than to assert that a thing can be and not be at the same time. Whether man was created mortal or immortal, then, is not a difficult question to decide.

The question concerning the immortality of the soul is confessedly more intricate, as the subject is farther removed, or rather wholly beyond the limits of our experience. We have seen men die as to their outward nature. We have followed their lifeless bodies to the grave and seen "the dust return to the earth as it was." But the soul, the mind, the spirit! who can assert that this is also mortal? Again who can with confidence declare that it is possessed of natural immortality, i. e. that it was originally created immortal? The Scriptures perhaps would hardly furnish direct proof to substantiate either of these hypotheses. But if the soul be possessed of inherent immortality, wherein, we would ask, consists the great, the vast importance attached in the Christian religion to the doctrine of the *resurrection of the dead?* Men would have lived, lived spiritual beings, lived necessarily and for ever, if Christ had never come, and died and rose again. How then was *life* and *immortality* brought to light in the gospel?

Would it not be more consonant with the truth of revelation to think and speak of the soul, not as immortal now or naturally, but as originally designed to take on immortality, if so we may speak, in God's own good time? Hence the desires, the longings of the soul after this unspeakable good. Some of its fainter glories are mildly shadowed forth in our spiritual natures, and constitute at once the central point of our wishes and hopes. It is something not yet possessed, at least in its higher developments—something still future, a vast, indefinable, but transcendantly glorious boon, for

which we sigh, an exalted nature towards which all our spiritual powers aspire.

Considering man, in this manner, a candidate for immortality, and not at present a possessor of it, we are enabled easily to recognise Jesus Christ in the infinitely interesting character in which the New Testament seems uniformly to present him. There he is not the mere restorer of God's tarnished work, the individual appointed to raise man again to a station he once before held, and which in Adam he lost. According to the Scriptures, "the first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven." "The first Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." The office of Christ, therefore, was not so much to restore any thing which had been lost, as to advance, exalt, purify, spiritualize, and make immortal human nature which had been hitherto "earthy" and grovelling. When we are taught that "in Adam all die," we are taught to contemplate the whole human race as invaded by death, as subject to mortality. This world is but a mighty sepulchre where death reigns triumphant. All are dying or dead. Yet it is in this world that Jesus Christ, "the Lord from heaven," appears, and proclaims himself the conqueror of death and the subverter of his empire. "I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE."

Viewing the subject in this light, we can see peculiar force and meaning in many passages of Scripture which are otherwise jejune or apparently untrue. When the apostle says to the Colossians, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God," he asserts a great and glorious truth. Christ was their life as he is ours, and the world's.

We hazard nothing, then, in saying that we know, that we can know of no immortality for man but which flows from Jesus Christ, "the Prince of life," through the power of his resurrection. This is the ground and the only sure ground

of our hope. In the words of another we would say, "On this doctrine of his resurrection is also built our faith in his promises, to give life and glory to his servants. For how could we believe him to be the Author of life, who remained under the power of death? If he had been confined to the grave all our hopes had been buried with him. But his resurrection is the *cause*, pattern, and argument of ours; and Christ may be said, not only to have raised his body from the grave but also his church with him." Does not the language of Peter fully establish this view of our subject? "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again to a lively [living] hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away." Without the resurrection then, man could have had no good, no living hope of immortality and an incorruptible inheritance.

One of the conclusions necessarily drawn from these facts is that no man can become immortal but through the ministry of Jesus Christ. He is the world's only hope. It may be well for us, however, to remember that "God only hath immortality," i. e. as Dr. Macknight says, "life without beginning and ending. If any other being hath life without ending, it is by his gift." This corresponds with the words of Jesus: "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he *given* to the Son to have life in himself," and to quicken "whom he will," from which it follows that there is but one kind of immortality in the universe. It necessarily springs from God and is communicated to our race through his own beloved Son. The life and immortality therefore which he gives is beyond doubt spiritual and divine. The streams must be like the fountain from which they immediately flow. To suppose that God will give immortality to any thing unholy, to any thing opposed to himself, his own nature, his government, his

glory, is to suppose that he will voluntarily perpetuate sin and rebellion and misery. He cannot build up another empire within his own, to be in eternal conflict with its spirit. Neither can Christ, his beloved Son, be the minister of sin, or render immortal the kingdom of Satan which he came to destroy.

This leads us to look upon the immortal state of being as one of spiritual purity and holiness, one in strict and eternal conformity and unison with Him "who only hath immortality," and who could not without violence to his own nature and will, bestow it upon what should be unworthy and opposed to himself. For "they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." If any one is disposed to ask how large a part of the human race shall be accounted worthy of the resurrection from the dead, we can only answer in the language of inspiration, "But now is Christ risen and become the first-fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam ALL die, even so in Christ shall ALL be made alive." Sin, and death, and the devil shall be destroyed, utterly and for ever, and the human race redeemed from their power by Jesus Christ. The universe shall be holy and happy, for God, even "the blessed God," shall be all in all.

NOTE K—page 250.

The celebrated infidel, Thomas Paine, says: "I trouble not myself about the manner of future existence. I content myself with believing even to a positive conviction that the power that gave me existence, is able to continue it in any form and manner he pleases, either with or without a body, and it appears more probable to me that I shall continue to

exist hereafter, than that I should have had existence, as I now have it before that existence began." *Age of Reason*, Part 1st, near the end.

Note L—page 203.

The following passage has sometimes been quoted as proof that Christ encouraged a spirit of strife: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I am come not to send peace but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law." Matt. x. 34, 35. But it requires only a moderate share of attention to perceive, and of candour to confess, that this passage by no means justifies the opinion in the behalf of which it is thus quoted. How very unjust it is to accuse a religion whose fundamental principle is, "Love to all men, even to enemies," of directly and intentionally unsheathing the sword, and sending it forth through the world, to drink the blood of God's rational offspring! That the Christian religion has been the innocent cause, or rather the occasion of much strife and contention is undoubted. This has been the accidental, or if you please, the necessary result of truth coming in conflict with error. But to charge this result to Christianity is as unreasonable as to ascribe the darkness of night or the frosts of winter to the influence of the sunbeams. The spirit of the world has been opposed to the religion of Jesus, and hence it has happened that in its progress it has been doomed to encounter persecution, and oftentimes of the bitterest and most fatal character. But in whose hand has been the sword? Let history answer. The setting of parents against children and of children against parents is then to be considered as a prediction of evils which the spirit of the times would bring upon Christians, rather than the legitimate effects of Christianity itself. In the primitive age

of our religion, instead of giving outward peace to the believer, it subjected him to great trials and persecutions. Enemies sprung up in his own household, and if history may be believed, of such a malignant character as, sundering all the ties of consanguinity, and friendship, rejoiced in delivering up the believing father, or son, or mother, or sister, to prison and to death. See Buck's Theological Dictionary. Art. Persecution. Also Paley's Evidences of Christianity.

Note M—page 211.

Some few years since Abner Kneeland offered through a paper called the "Boston Investigator," of which he was editor, to pay the sum of one thousand dollars, to any person who would prove the existence of Jesus Christ! The offer was accepted by the editor of the "Sentinel and Star in the West," on condition, that the money should be given to a literary institution at Philomath, Ia. But for some reason best known to himself Mr. Kneeland did not think proper to engage in the discussion.

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